Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit

Annual Report 1980

The front cover shows post-medieval material excavated from Oxford. A description of the analysis of post-medieval pottery and glass from the St. Ebbe's excavations will be found on page 60.

This report is reprinted from CBA Group 9, *Newsletter*, 11, 1981.

THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT - Tom Hassall, *Director*

From the outset of 1980 it was clear that the year was going to be a difficult one for the Unit. The problem was described in detail in the introduction to last year's report. The income of the Unit has not kept pace with inflation while the need for the survey and excavation of threatened archaeological sites continues while many past projects await reports.

The Unit was in part able to plan a strategy for coping with the decline in real terms of its income. Thanks to careful house-keeping in the previous year a small financial surplus was brought forward. During 1980 there was a planned reduction in staff of four people whose specific projects came to an end. The Unit's programme of excavations was also curtailed, however thanks to the Manpower Services Commission funding a Project Based Work Experience scheme under the Youth Opportunities Programme, the effect of this curtailment has not caused an actual diminution of excavations.

The Unit could not plan for the effect of pay rises during the year. The Unit's staff are employed on terms and conditions of service which follow those of the Local Authorities. The Unit's Committee and the Unit staff are anxious to continue this arrangement as far as is practicable even if enforced redundancies occur. In theory the Local Authority pay awards are announced in July, in practise this year's settlement was not reached until November. This late announcement came as a blessing in disguise. By November it was possible to arrive at some fairly accurate forecasts as to income and expenditure. At the time of writing the Unit has sufficient income to honour the pay award from December to the end of the financial year and will give the staff the back dated pay July-November if the necessary extra funds can be raised.

The financial insecurity has naturally caused the Oxfordshire Archaeological Committee to look closely at its structure and that of its executive, the Unit. The Committee has taken the decision that both it and the Unit should become a Limited Liability Company. In becoming a Company the Unit's position as a Charity will not be altered nor will it alter the composition of the Committee. However Limited Liability status will protect individual members of the Committee against any financial claims. The Unit is one of the last independent archaeological Units in the country to seek company status. It was not felt necessary while the County Council directly serviced the Unit's finances, but with the end of this servicing in March 1980, as part of the Local Authority cuts in public spending, such a change in status has been considered essential.

Professor Frere has continued as Chairman of the Committee. Louise Armstrong has now completed her first year as the Committee's admirable Secretary. Mrs. Yardley ceased to be the Oxford City's representative on the Committee and her place has been taken by

Mr. Fenley. The Committee has not however lost Mrs. Yardley altogether since she has been standing in for the County's representative, Mr. Wilton. The Committee was very sorry to lose the services of Dr. Myres who resigned after serving on the Committee since its foundation.

The end of the association between the Unit and the County Treasurer's Department was a sad event. The association went back to 1967 when the County Treasurer began to administer the finances of the former Oxford Archaeological Excavation Committee. Throughout the thirteen years the Director of the Unit had a very close working relationship with the County Treasurer, his Deputy and many members of his staff. From April 1980 the Unit's finances have been administered by Mr. W.A. Castle himself a retired member of the County Treasurer's staff.

There have been a number of changes in staff during the year. Sarah Richardson resigned as the Unit's Secretary to become Secretary to the Financial Director of the local division of Ind Coope. She was replaced by Mrs. Lindsay Donaghy. Nicholas Palmer left the Unit having completed his report on the Hamel, Oxford. He has taken up a temporary appointment in Warwickshire. Simon Palmer and Christopher Storey who have been supervising the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) Special Temporary Employment Programme (STEP) both left. A maximum of fifteen people at any one time were employed on the STEP project which came to an end in July. Simon Palmer was reappointed as a result of further MSC funding to become the Senior Supervisor of the new Project Based Work Experience scheme which began in November. MSC are also paying the salaries of two other staff on this scheme: Sarah Green, Finds Assistant and Alan Hardy, Supervisor/Driver. Alan had previously been one of the STEP employees. Peter Rooke, one of the other STEP employees, has been undertaking voluntary work with the Unit on a regular basis. Tim Allen joined the Unit on a short term contract to complete the report on the Mingies Ditch, Hardwick site. Rita Rattray worked during the year on a short term contract to help Maureen Mellor with the post-medieval pottery for Oxford.

A number of students have worked on a temporary basis with the Unit. Most of these have been seconded as part of Oxford University Department for External Studies' Archaeology In-Service Training scheme. Special mention must be made of Stewart Brown, Christina Unwin and Robert White whose work appears in the main report. The Unit also welcomed Cécile Tremolet who worked for three months on a studentship funded by the Délégation Générale à la Recherche Scientifique et Technique.

As usual the actual work of the Unit has fallen into three distinct categories: Survey, Excavation and Post Excavation. So far as Surveys are concerned there have been two main projects. George Lambrick has begun a detailed survey of the flood plain of the Thames (No. 1) thanks to a British Academy grant. Richard Hingley continues his Upper Thames Valley Survey (No. 2). This work was begun in 1979 also with the aid of a British Academy grant

and is now being continued as part of Richard's post-graduate work at Southampton University. The main effort has been in field survey of sites identified from air photographs last year. Richard has also continued his own detailed survey of the area around the Noah's Ark, Frilford/Garford. Surveys were also carried out at Sandford-on-Thames (No. 4) by two In-Service trainees, Stewart Brown and Robert White, and of the White Horse, Uffington (No. 5). The general Oxfordshire Parish Survey continues to be serviced jointly by the Oxfordshire Department of Museum Services (ODMS) and the Unit. Monitoring of planning applications with John Steane of the ODMS continues on a regular fortnightly basis.

The most public part of the Unit's work continues to be excavation. The projects listed below range from David Miles' major excavation at Claydon Pike, Lechlade/Fairford (No. 53) to small watching briefs. Many of the sites depend on close co-operation between the Unit's staff and individuals and local societies. It is a pleasure to thank (in the order of projects listed) Roger Thomas, Jeff Wallis and other members of the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society, John Blair of Brasenose College, Alan Briggs and the Didcot and District Historical and Archaeological Society, Geoff Williams of Witney, Michael Stone, Ian Meadows, the Launton Local History Society, Ian Williams of the Oxford University Archaeological Society (OUAS), Nicholas Palmer, Julian Munby, Roger Ainslie, Harold Mytum and John Taylor of the OUAS, Maureen Page, Pat Granados and other members of the Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society. The help of all these people freely given enables the Unit to generate the size of excavation programme that it does.

Less public than the excavation is the work of report writing which is concentrated at 46 Hythe Bridge Street. This work is currently occupying most of the time of the full-time staff. Gwynne Oakley has continued to process the Unit's finds aided by a small band of regular voluntary helpers. The Unit is very grateful for the regular assistance of Pat Horsman, Elizabeth Gue Barbara Howes, Jean Mitchell, Sarah Marsh and Alice Webster. More volunteers will always be welcome.

Improvements in the finds recording system have been tested at Smiths Field, Hardwick with Yelford and are now in use at Lechlade. The system is not designed for computer but would provide the essential input should this be required. Storage capacity at Holton Park, the ODMS store for bulk finds, has been increased by 50% by the erection of new shelving and finds retrieval should be easier when the new rack coding system is fully implemented.

An innovation in this year's report is the survey of the current post excavation projects (Nos. 54-62). They are now included so that a more rounded picture of the Unit's activities can be gained. A number of projects have been completed during the year including John Hinchliffe's report on the multi-period site at Appleford (environmental material for this site is discussed under No. 64).

John Hinchliffe now works for the DoE's Central Excavation Unit and he has been helped in the final preparation of the report by Roger Thomas. Nicholas Palmer's report on the Hamel, Oxford (No. 60) was completed. Neil McGavin's report on the Roman Cemetery at the Cricket Field, Stanton Harcourt also went to press. All these reports will be published in *Oxoniensia*. The journal's new editor, Dr. Janet Cooper, has been of very great assistance in the editing of these reports. The other main report to be completed this year is David Miles' long awaited report on Barton Court Farm, Abingdon (No. 54). This report will be published as another Council for British Archaeology (CBA) Research Report. The Unit hopes this report will be a milestone in the use of text-fiche. Henry Cleere, the Director of the CBA, and Valerie Horsler have provided much valuable advice with the technical preparation of the report.

Environmental archaeology remains one of the Unit's chief concerns. Separate reports are provided by Bob Wilson and Mark Robinson on their work. The transfer of the two members of staff to the University Museum on a DoE contract has not yet taken place owing to delays in conversion work at the Museum. Martin Jones, formerly with the Unit and now working in the Department of Botany, has continued to work very closely on the Unit's projects as part of his Science Research Council research. Mary Harman once again carried out examination of human skeletal material for the Unit on a free-lance basis.

The work of the Unit continues to be reported in the specialist and the more popular press. These publications range from a specialist note by Mark Robinson on 'Archaeological finds of wasp galls' in the Journal of Archaeological Science to David Miles' fortnightly column for the *Abingdon Herald*. Articles by George Lambrick and David Miles appeared in a collection of papers published by HMSO for the Department of the Environment on plough damage to archaeological sites (*The Past Under the Plough*). The regular affairs of the Unit are published in the *Newsletter* which now appears six times per year. Members of the Unit are asked to give many lectures and talks at a range of conferences, and national and local societies. These included Tom Hassall speaking at an international conference on urban archaeology organised by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication held at Tours; at the Society of Post Medieval Archaeology's Annual Conference, and a Conference on Urban Friaries in York. David Miles gave a paper at the aerial photography conference at Nottingham. The Unit was asked by the British Society of Soil Science to conduct one of the Society's all day outings during its conference held at Oxford. The Unit itself organised an afternoon reports meeting for local archaeologists.

The Unit continues to depend on assistance from colleagues in many Departments of the University and the Local Authorities. The very close relationship with the Department for External Studies has continued. Mr. R.G. Smthurst and Dr. G. Thomas have taken an active interest in the affairs of the Unit but as usual it is Trevor Rowley and his Secretary, Shirley Hermon, who continued to provide the crucial link between the Unit and the Department. Unit

staff took part for the first time in the Department's Oxford/ Smithsonian Seminar in addition to lecturing at evening classes and weekend schools and arranging the Department's training excavation.

The Unit is constantly in contact with the Oxfordshire Department of Museum Services and the Ashmolean Museum. At the Oxfordshire County Museum, James Bond, John Steane, Ahmed Shistawi and John Rhodes continue to provide expert advice. Dan Chadwick at the Museum of Oxford is involved with the archaeology of the City. At the Ashmolean David Brown, Arthur MacGregor and Gwyn Miles have been particularly helpful. The Museums and the Unit were closely involved with the conference of the Society for Post Medieval Archaeology held at Trinity College in the Autumn. The conference acted as a spur to the ODMS Research Project on the brick and pottery industries of Oxfordshire with which Maureen Mellor and Eleanor Beard of the Unit were very much concerned. The Unit put on a display of post medieval finds from discrete provenances in St. Ebbe's. The display included a superb collection of glass bottles and created a great deal of interest. John Ashdown, the City Conservation Officer and President of the Society for Post Medieval Archaeology, provided much encouragement for the exhibition in addition to generally giving advice on post medieval material from the City.

The Unit is especially indebted to three other University Departments. Susan Hockey of the Computing Centre has provided invaluable assistance so far as the Unit's computing is concerned. John Fletcher, Helen Hatcher, Robert Hedges and Mark Pollard of the Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art have all been involved with Unit projects. Finally St. Cross College has loaned the Unit a 'golfball' typewriter which has allowed the Unit to produce this and other reports in a 'camera-ready' form.

Outside Oxford the Unit is particularly indebted to the many members of the staff of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments of the Department of the Environment who are concerned with the Unit's various projects. The year has seen various changes of the organisation of the Inspectorate and three Inspectors have been involved with the Unit's current programme: Brian Davison, Tony Fleming and Paul Gosling. Sarnia Butcher has advised on the publication side while John Musty and Helen Keeley have assisted with the administration of the environmental work.

The Unit has weathered 1980 but it must face 1981 realistically. The commitment to existing Rescue archaeology projects is known and sites likely to come up in the immediate, medium and long term future can be readily identified throughout the County. The threat to our regional archaeology is as great as ever for while major construction and mineral extraction have slowed down the degradation of sites through agriculture, always the greatest problem, is as great if not greater than before. What is even more uncertain than ever before is the level of finance available to implement an effective archaeological programme. To meet this challenge it will be necessary for the Unit to exploit all resources open to it but there is a determination within the Unit to continue to record

archaeological sites in the County and elsewhere through excavation before destruction. The programme will be maintained on as large a scale as possible.

Finally it is a pleasure to thank all those organisations who by grant aiding the Unit have made its 1980 programme possible. These organisations include, from Central Government: the Department of the Environment and the Manpower Services Commission; from Local Government: Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, the Vale of White Horse District Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Abingdon Town Council and the following Parish Councils: Cumnor, St. Helen Without, Sunningwell, Sutton Courtenay; from the University: the Department for External Studies and St. Cross College, together with the following Colleges: St. John's, St. Peter's, and Wadham. The Unit is also grateful for the major covenanted grant from the Amey Roadstone Corporation and other substantial grants from the British Academy and the Oxford Preservation Trust. Without the continued support of all these donors the Rescue archaeology programme of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit would not have been possible in 1980.

SURVEY PROJECTS

1. THAMES FLOOD PLAIN SURVEY - George Lambrick

A Gazetteer of known sites and finds from the Thames flood plain and the lower parts of its tributaries between Cricklade and Goring (numbering *c.* 250 items) has been compiled, and preliminary visits have been made to most of these, to assess their condition, and where possible to record additional information about earthworks or to recover finds from surface scatters. An assessment of the modern land use of the whole flood plain is being made with the help of a Nature Conservancy Council survey to gauge the rate of destruction or damage to sites. It is hoped that further work will include extra biological sampling of selected sites, and more detailed surveys of earthworks and finds scatters. Some attempt will also be made to sample apparently 'blank' areas using surveys by the Nature Conservancy Council, Soil Survey and Thames Water Authority of the land use, soil profiles, and surface topography of the flood plain to select areas for study.

So far only a preliminary analysis of the results is possible, giving some idea of the range of sites known about for each period. However, it is also possible by considering a fairly superficial assessment of the medieval settlement pattern at least to begin to show what questions can be asked about the later prehistoric and Roman periods. For earlier prehistory settlement evidence is too fragmentary, and in any case the river régime may have been so

different that such comparisons are not valid. It is hoped rather that this problem may be elucidated by careful sampling of selected sites.

For the neolithic, biological samples from Buscot and Mingies Ditch have already provided interesting new evidence of the pre-clearance landscape of the flood plain. Neolithic flint scatters have been found, two notable examples being near Lechlade and on an 'island' of gravel terrace at Pinkhill, south of Eynsham. The cropmarks of a causewayed enclosure are recorded near Chimney but another near Langford, on flood plain according to the geological survey, is actually on the edge of the gravel terrace. It has been suggested that the Drayton cursus runs north across part of the flood plain, but there is no positive evidence for this.

The Bronze Age is chiefly represented by ring ditches, mostly undated in any direct sense. Evidence for Beaker occupation on the flood plain was recorded at the Hamel in Oxford and has been found elsewhere also. Some cropmark ring ditches survive as earthworks as on Port Meadow, at King's Weir Wytham and near Lechlade. One of the King's Weir earthworks is a substantial mound, the others are mostly low mounds or slight ditches. Bronze Age finds were recovered from one of the King's Weir barrows excavated in 1978, and crude flintwork perhaps of the Bronze Age period has been recovered from the Lechlade example and from the vicinity of some ring ditches near Tadpole Bridge. Possible plough marks in the alluvium overlying the Beaker feature at the Hamel may indicate Bronze Age ploughing of the flood plain, and biological evidence from there, King's Weir, Farmoor, and other sites at present suggests that the flood plain was much drier in the Bronze Age and that serious flooding and the onset of rapid alluviation did not begin until the middle Iron Age. At Wallingford an occupation layer containing late Bronze Age pottery in the vicinity of many finds of contemporary metalwork from the river is potentially extremely interesting though as yet not adequately understood.

The Iron Age use of the flood plain is somewhat better known, especially as a result of excavations at Farmoor and Mingies Ditch. As yet there is no convincing evidence of early Iron Age occupation on the flood plain, though there is good evidence of its exploitation in the middle Iron Age. If this distinction is a valid one it will shed valuable light on the development of the agricultural economy of the period. There seems to be a range of settlement types on the flood plain in the Iron Age, from the temporary seasonal farmsteads of the Farmoor types, probably also recognizable elsewhere (most notably Port Meadow) though enclosed settlements (at present only definitely represented by Mingies Ditch) to the fully defensive enclosure at Burroway, where the ramparts, incorporating a great deal of burnt clay, still survive as substantial earthworks, though now ploughed over. Biological evidence from Farmoor and Mingies Ditch suggest the exploitation of the rich flood plain grassland by specialist pastoral farmers.

Relatively few Roman settlements are known on the flood plain but again show some range of settlement type, though very much at

the smaller end of the scale. A small villa is known west of Inglesham, though this may largely be on the edge of the gravel terrace, and stone buildings are recorded near Cricklade and at Gill Mill, south of Witney. One of these, if not both, is close to a crossing point for a Roman road. Small 'native' type settlements are known east of Stanton Harcourt, associated with cropmarks of trackways and paddocks, and at Meadow Farm, Bampton associated with irregular enclosures. These seem to be fairly late settlements and might again reflect changes in the late Roman economy.

No early Saxon settlements are known on the flood plain, and the later pre-conquest pattern seems to be largely reflected in that of the Middle Ages when settlement on the flood plain itself is rare except for mills. In the Windrush valley a building is recorded just south of Witney, and there are earthwork enclosures near Standlake church and a pottery scatter (possibly not on true flood plain) to the south near Gaunt House. Further up the Thames a small settlement is being washed into the river at Rushey Weir; but this again is partly on higher ground. The suburbs of Oxford expanded onto the flood plain to the south in the late 10th century and to the west in the 12th century, and a number of medieval religious houses are also sited on the flood plain (St. John's Priory, Lechlade and Oseney and Rewley Abbeys and the Greyfriars and Blackfriars in Oxford).

2. THE UPPER THAMES VALLEY SURVEY - Richard Hingley (Fig. 1)

The aerial photograph plotting element of the survey, reported on in last year's report has come to an end. Efforts are now being directed to the examination of sites in the field (see hill-fort report below).

Field work is being carried out as a two stage process. First comes a preliminary survey which is aimed at examining a site's location in the landscape and searching for artefacts on the surface. The second stage only occurs if, given the aims of the survey, the site is considered to be of importance. In these cases detailed field work is undertaken.

Sixty sites have been examined in a preliminary fashion; eight of these have been further surveyed in a more detailed manner.

In addition one detailed survey (see Frilford/ Garford survey below) is being carried out in the Vale of White Horse, and a further similar survey is planned, and has been begun, in West Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire Hill-Forts and Defended Enclosures

As part of the Upper Thames Survey research is being conducted into hill-forts. Each site has been visited and information on several points of interest collected. One type of information collected concerns present damage and threats to sites; and it is

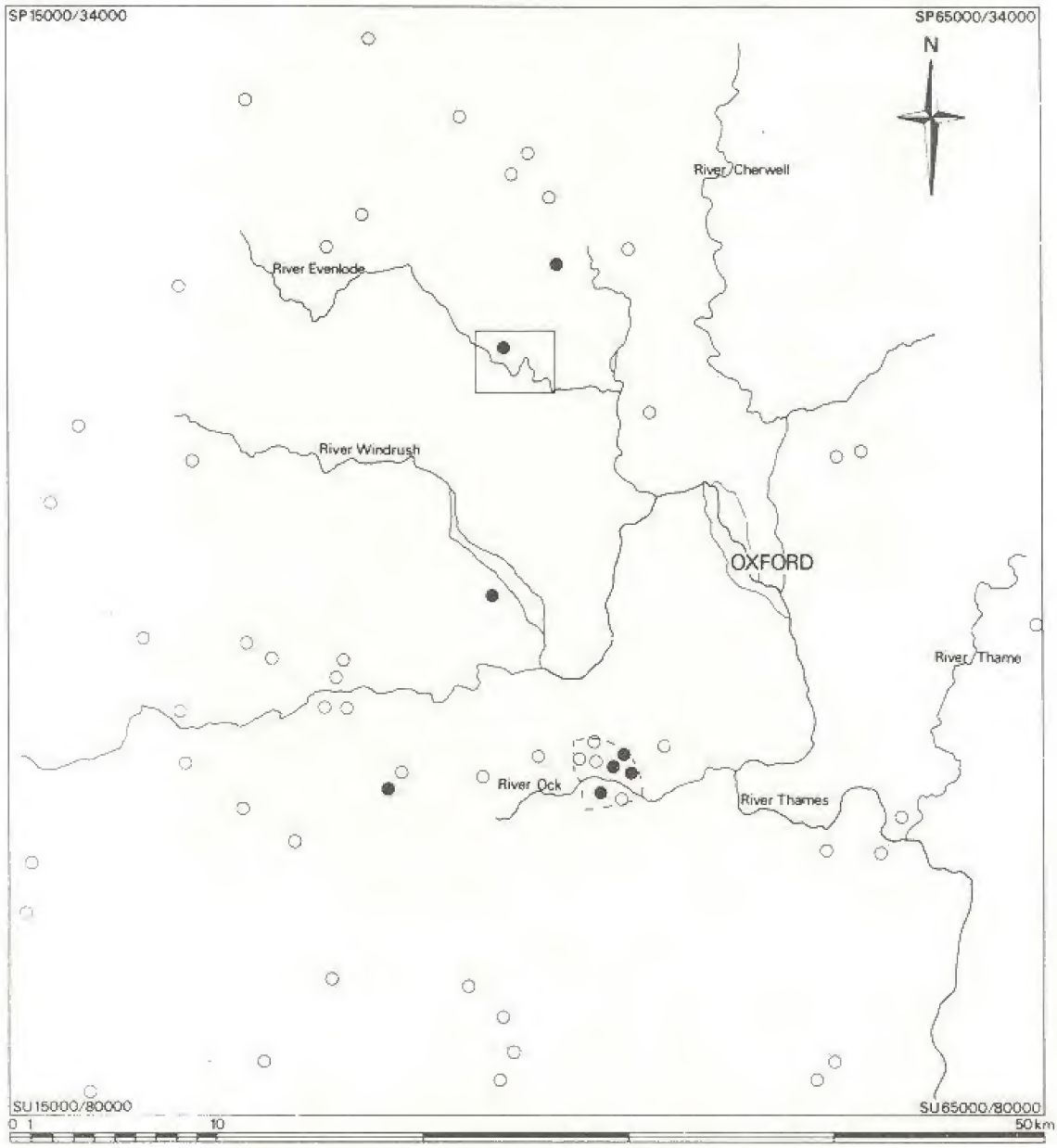


Figure 1. The Upper Thames Valley Survey

TABLE: THE CONDITION OF HILL-FORTS AND DEFENDED ENCLOSURES WITHIN THE OXFORDSHIRE SECTION OF THE UPPER THAMES SURVEY AREA

Common name	Condition of the ramparts	Condition of the interior
IDBURY CAMP	D	C
CHASTLETON	B/E	C/D
LYNEHAM CAMP	A/E	C/D
BURROWAY	D	C
KNOWLBURY	A/C	C
EYNSHAM HALL PARK	Not visited	
ILBURY	Not visited	
CASSINGTON	E	D
BLAYDON ROUND CASTLE	C	B
BURY HILL	D	C
ALFREDS CASTLE	B/C/E	A
BADBURY CAMP	A/B	B
LYSONS CAMP	A/D	C
HARDWELL CAMP	A/B	B
UFFINGTON CASTLE	B	C
RAMS HILL	D	C
CHERBURY CAMP	B/C	C
SEGSBURY CAMP	B	C
BLEWBURTON	D	C
SINODUN HILLS	A/B	B/C
DYKE HILLS	A/C/E	C

Key

Under 'condition of the ramparts'

A: rampart has undergone little or no destruction during the course of time (at least any damage is not now visible to the observer).

B: some disturbance (cattle trampling of the bank, rabbit and badger holes, small scale stone quarrying, heavy growth of largish trees and natural erosion have all been observed).

C: more serious disturbances of the type mentioned in B.

D: the ramparts have been ploughed over.

E: destruction by actual physical removal of the ramparts.

Under 'condition of the interior'

A: the interior is unploughed and undamaged.

B: trees have been planted over the interior, probably resulting in the disturbance of archaeological deposits.

C: the interior has been, or is being, ploughed and that considerable damage is being caused to archaeological layers.

this topic which is outlined below.

For each site notes were taken on the condition of the ramparts and the state of the interior. The results are shown in the accompanying table. The table reveals some worrying statistics. Only six sites (32%) out of nineteen visited have ramparts in conditions A and B for the whole of their circumference. At nine sites (48%) serious damage has been caused to ramparts by quarrying, flattening or ploughing of parts or all of the ramparts. These statistics may be milder than reality as literary and place name evidence make it clear that many hill-forts have been ploughed out or flattened, and lost altogether. One probable hill-fort at Bury Hills, Buscot, has been located during the survey.

Concerning the interior of forts only one site (5% of the total) is in Class A; of the remaining eighteen, three (16%) have suffered serious damage by quarrying or digging.

Some case studies may show the threat to hill-forts and other earthwork sites in Oxfordshire. At CHERBURY, despite the efforts of the land owner, serious damage is being done to the ramparts by badgers. One badger hole extended at least one third of the width of the rampart from the inside out.

ALFREDS CASTLE is the only site with an interior in Class A. The rampart, however, has been seriously damaged by stone quarrying, and resultant earth slip. Although the practice of earth quarrying ceased many years ago quite an amount of slippage appears to have occurred on the south west of the site in the period between two visits to the site in February and August 1980.

By far the worst case of man made destruction dating from a recent period of time is CHASTLETON. At the north west of the camp a trench has been cut through the bank to take a pipe from cattle sheds in the interior of the camp to a slurry pool. The slurry pool, accompanied by a brick and concrete hut has been constructed outside the camp and impinges on the bank. In the north western area of the interior of the camp earth has been scraped up, presumably as slurry from cattle trample, and has been dumped in a 2/2.5 meter wide bank on the interior of the rampart. Scraping up of slurry around the cow shed in this area has caused a marked dip in the level of the top soil and the scraping has reached down to the natural soil over much of this area.

Most other sites where serious damage has been caused to the ramparts and/or interior (e.g. Dyke Hills, Lysons Camp, Blewburton) were damaged before 1940; but at ploughed sites like Idbury and Burroway, this damage continues.

3. FRILFORD/GARFORD: The Noah's Ark Survey - Richard Hingley (Fig. 2)

Work has continued on this survey which was reported on last year. The aim of the survey is to record sites of all periods over a 7km^2 area in the Vale of White Horse. Sites are located by walking all

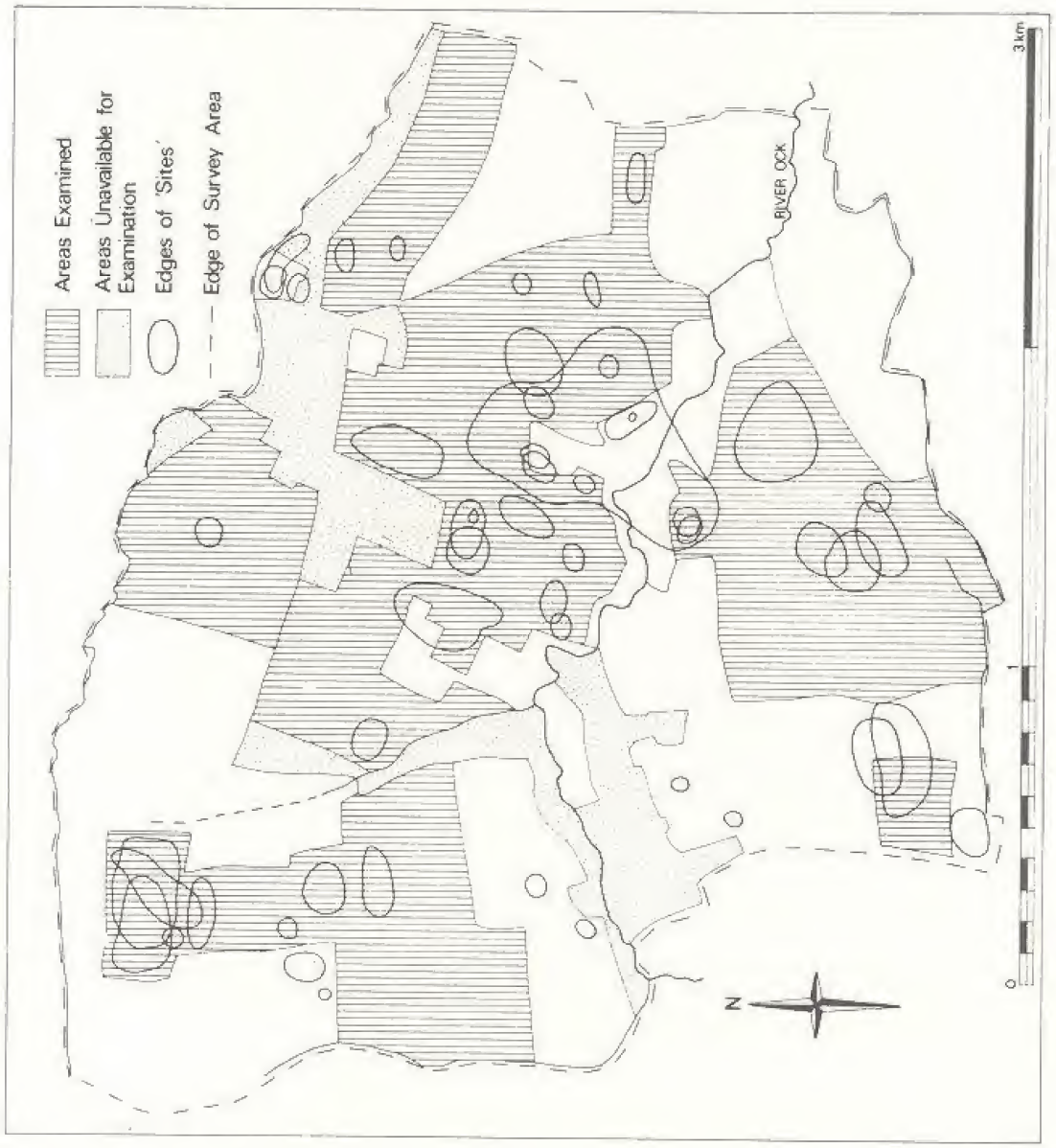


Figure 2. Frilford and Garford: The Noah's Ark Survey

arable fields after ploughing and harrowing, in transects spaced at 10m intervals. Usually when a site is located a grid of 20 or 10m squares is set out to record the finds.

One major problem with this method (apart from its time consuming nature) is that 10/20m square gridding does not seem an efficient way of recording flint scatters as these are usually extensive and dispersed. Ten metre squares have been found especially useful for recording Roman pottery scatters.

The rate of discovery of sites for areas walked this season has slowed down. Aerial photography is proving to be an accurate method of site location on this area of limestone soil. The majority of sites located by field walking were hinted at by aerial photography. One site which aerial photography failed to identify however was the largest one in the survey area; aerial photography provided little indication of a 25ha. Roman 'small town' around the Noah's Ark Inn temple and cemetery sites.

The figure shows the boundaries of the survey in relationship to natural features of the landscape, along with areas examined and areas that can not be examined (permanent pasture, building plots and so on). The figure also shows the area covered by all 'sites' irrespective of date. Field systems have not been included as 'sites' but flint, dense pottery scatters, cemeteries and isolated burials are included. The map demonstrates the concept that this area of Southern England, at least, is virtually one continuous archaeological site.

4. SANDFORD-ON-THAMES - Stewart Brown and Robert White (Fig. 3)

A survey of the upstanding earthworks (PRN 11,583) was carried out in August 1980 in advance of building works on part of the field known as Church Close (SP 5201 5301). The area to be developed lies alongside Sandford Road to the north east of the Church. The part of Church Close to the east of the Church has been levelled to accommodate the Sandford Recreation Ground. A rather indistinct aerial photograph of this site, taken about 1930 and published in an article on the village (R. Crickmay, *Top. Oxon.* 21, 1976-7), shows linear embankments and ditches extending to Church Lane. These have been transcribed (F) and added to the present ground survey.

The earthworks as surveyed included a feature (A) wide enough to have been a hollow way, 8m across, 1m deep and running north from Church Lane towards Littlemore brook. This 'hollow way' appears to be an extension of the track which leads from the south to meet Church Lane just to the west of the Church. The course of this route would then flank the village on the west side and continue to cross the brook at a mid-point between the present Sandford Road crossing and the site of the old Preceptory. The 'hollow way' was flanked on the east side by another smaller gulley or ditch (B) of similar depth. To the north and west of

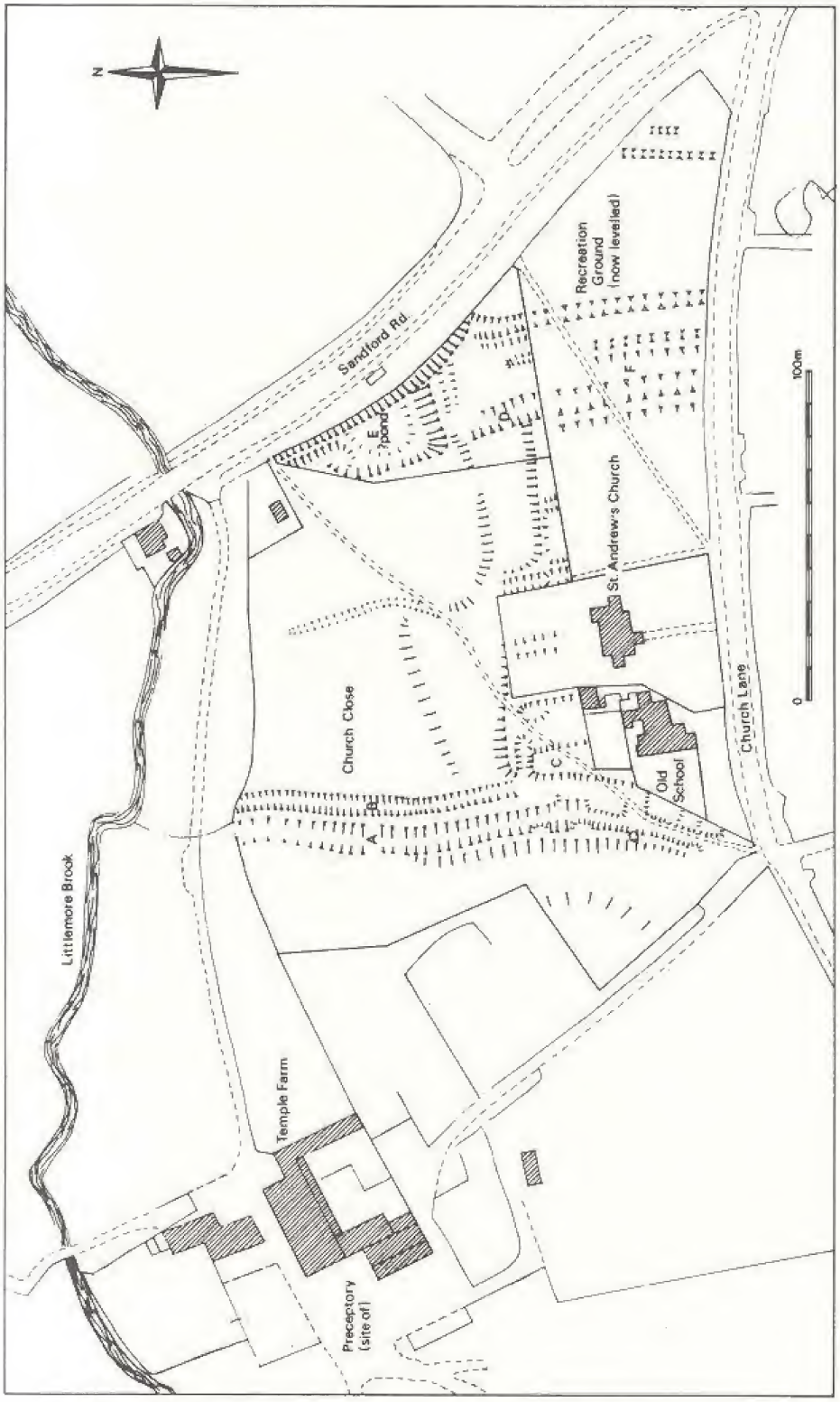


Figure 3. Sandford-on-Thames. Earthworks of the shrunken medieval village

the old school, built in 1860, are some slight indications of levelled sites (C) adjacent to the 'hollow way'. A series of parallel strips bounded by low banks and shallow ditches extended for up to 20m into the south of the field. A larger ditch (D) carried further northward into the field running into a large shallow and embanked depression (E) tentatively interpreted as an infilled pond.

The first mention of the manor at Sandford occurs in a charter of 811 AD (*V.C.H. Oxon.* V, 267-275). By the time of the Domesday Survey there were 10 villeins and 8 bordars. The Sandford Cartulary (O.R.S. XIX, I, 24-25) records 26 tenements in 1279 and the poll tax of 1377 returned 59 inhabitants over the age of 14 years. The population had declined by the end of the 17th century, when, in 1676, 54 people figured in the Compton census.

The manor was given to the Order of Templars at Cowley shortly after *c.* 1240 who then established their headquarters at Sandford on the site of the present Temple Farm. The Sandford Cartulary was probably initiated as a result of the move and records many references to properties and persons within the village. The church contains stonework of the Norman period in its eastern and southern walls, the stone tower was built in 1840 after the 'Norman style'. The graveyard had to be fenced in 1789. The exact location of the medieval village centre remains somewhat of a problem. The aerial photograph of *c.* 1930 shows the banks and ditches of the narrow strips under the present Recreation Ground as extending to Church Lane. It also shows similar strip features on the south side of the Lane and ridge and furrow beyond that aligned in an east-west direction. If indeed Church Lane does form the axis of the old medieval village with parallel strips running back from the street on either side, then the siting of the Norman church appears to occupay two of the plots.

The survey has shown that narrow rectangular enclosures at one time lay to the north of Church Lane but have subsequently been abandoned . The present village lies somewhat scattered along the east side of Sandford Road and to the south of Church Lane.

5. UFFINGTON: The White Horse - David Miles

In the past year the National Trust has been carrying out conservation work on its newly acquired property of White Horse Hill. The DoE has also been repairing the White Horse itself, in the continual battle against erosion. This has involved solidifying the edges of the Horse and returfing some of the edges.

It was felt that the time was appropriate to carry out a detailed survey of the Horse. Over one weekend in August members of the Unit with Basil Turton and Nick Griffiths of the Ashmolean Museum began geophysical, contour and relief surveys. The aim was to detect changes in the shape of the Horse to throw light on the vexed question

of its age. The conventional wisdom that the segmented beast has a Celtic pedigree has been challenged by Diana Woolner who believes that an original more prosaic animal dated to the Saxon period.

The initial survey suggests that changes have taken place in the Horse's shape especially around the head. It is planned to complete the survey in the coming months when a more detailed assessment will be possible.

EXCAVATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Oxfordshire

6. ABINGDON: Checker Walk - Roger Thomas

Excavations were carried out by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (AAAHS) on a vacant plot on the west side of Checker Walk, Abingdon, in the winter and spring of 1980. The site (which is due to be redeveloped) lies within the precincts of the former Abingdon Abbey, in an area known to have been the 'Base Court' or domestic courtyard of the Abbey.

A tench 9m by 4m was opened. The west part of the trench contained two large adjoining cess-pits, one lined with stone, the other with brick, which had completely removed all earlier deposits. Both cess-pits had been filled in the 19th century. The west wall of the stone cess-pit abutted a stone wall which ran roughly parallel to the present west boundary wall of the plot.

In the east part of the trench the earliest features were 3 V-shaped ditches, all aligned north-south and cut into the gravel. Two were apparently late Iron Age, the other Roman. Above these there was a disturbed deposit of dark brown loam which produced mainly Roman pottery. Cutting this layer, and the ditches, was a deep pit which yielded medieval pottery.

These features were sealed by a compact surface composed of small cobbles and gravel. A few sherds of medieval pottery came from this surface, and it can reasonably be identified as part of the Abbey Base Court.

Above this surface was a layer of dark soil containing much animal bone and some post-medieval pottery. A rubbish pit and the construction pit for a well had been cut through this layer.

Above these were the brick and cobble yard surfaces relating to the last buildings to have stood on the site.

The Iron Age/Roman discoveries at this site confirm observations made elsewhere in the town. The finding of the medieval yard surface demonstrates that remains of the monastic period do survive intact in this part of the Abbey precinct.

7. ABINGDON: Nuffield Way Allotments - Richard Chambers

In 1976 Romano-British burials were discovered a few yards inside the MG car factory compound. In May 1980 a trial excavation was undertaken to test whether the cemetery extended south on to the former allotments in Nuffield Way before industrial development began.

Two trial trenches, each 30m long by 1m wide were dug down 1m-1.2m to the natural sand and gravel. Neither trench showed any trace of burials. However the reddish-brown alluvial subsoil contained several Romano-British pot sherds, animal bone and a quern fragment. Two shallow medieval plough furrows were seen in section cutting through the earlier soil.

The Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society also carried out random sampling over the allotment site to attempt to find any areas of settlement. The sampling indicated that there were no further settlements but that this ground always lay at the fringe of previous Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval settlements. A watching brief was kept over the installation of services on the site during the early part of 1980. (Centred SU 4827 9713; PRN 12,699)

8. ABINGDON: Peachcroft Farm Housing Estate - Richard Chambers (Fig. 4)

Although construction work has continued throughout the year on this housing estate no more archaeological finds have been reported. (Centred SU 512 988; PRN 11,882)

The enamelled bronze disc brooch mentioned last year has now been examined by Martin Henig who kindly provided the information on which the following comments are made. The brooch is 32mm in diameter

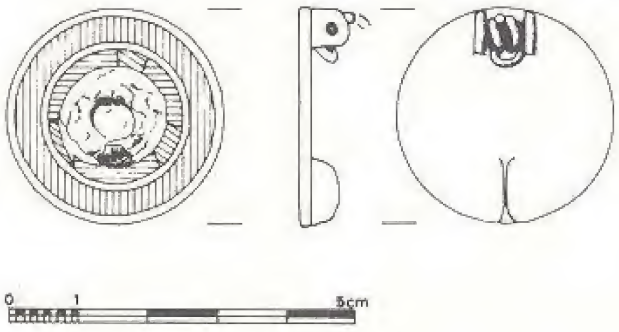


Figure 4. Abingdon: Peachcroft Farm Housing Estate. Roman enamelled disc brooch

it has a plain, flat back with a coiled bronze wire spring fastening. Both the pin and the catch plate are broken, and the brooch, which was originally flat, is now bent and cracked. The front of the brooch is decorated and comprises concentric impressions filled with enamel. The outer circle of bluish-green transparent glass encloses an inner damaged circle of blue divided symmetrically into three parts by sections of red enamel. The centre of the face comprises a broad, bronze band now badly corroded bearing a bronze ribbed knob at one point on its circumference. There is a depression in the very centre of the face.

Disc brooches first appear in the late 1st century AD. The 2nd century saw the main development of these brooches and many of them were products of the continental industry which continued into the 3rd century. Several examples have been recovered in Oxfordshire from the Woodeaton Temple site and a Romano-British settlement at Campsfield, Kidlington. Each of these brooches had a central raised stud and the construction of the centre of this brooch suggests that a similar stud may originally have been present.

9. ASTHALL - Richard Chambers

Two adult burials were discovered whilst excavating for a soak-away in a cottage garden at Asthall (SP 2889 1127; PRN 12,661). One burial was laid supine in a grave 1m deep with the head to the north. The other burial was only observed in section. Although several sherds of Roman pottery were found in the surrounding soil there was no dating evidence clearly associated with the burials themselves. In 1917 fifteen burials were found 90m to the east of the 1980 discoveries. All these burials are probably of Roman date and may therefore belong to the large Romano-British settlement at Asthall.

10. ASTON TIRROLD - Richard Chambers

Several undateable worked flints have been found whilst excavating a hole at the rear of the United Reformed Church's Chapel at Aston Tirrold (SU 5542 8601, PRN 12,390).

11. BARFORD St. MICHAEL - Richard Chambers

A small quantity of medieval pottery was recovered by workmen whilst excavating a new sewage-pump pit as a part of the watermill restoration work. The medieval village may have extended onto this site (SP 4325 3282, PRN 12,386).

12. BICESTER: The Causeway - Robert White

A small excavation was conducted by Robert White during March, on a development plot fronting The Causeway (centred SP 5844, 2235, PRN 12,387). The Causeway connects the Market Square with St. Edburg's Church. It crosses two branches of the River Bure to the east and west of the site as well as the flood plain itself. Construction work on a housing development at Lower Home Close, immediately north of the site had revealed extensive stratified medieval occupation reported last year. It was hoped that excavation might show the relationship between the settlement nuclei of Bicester and produce a stratified medieval pottery sequence for the town.

A north-south trial trench 17.5m long was dug by hand. The northern end of the trench was crossed by a number of stone lined drains set into post-medieval deposits. In the middle of the trench there were a series of well preserved post-medieval cobbled surfaces. overlying a thick deposit of dark grey silt. At the southern end of the trench there were a series of tipped deposits which formed the edge of the foundation of The Causeway and contained several fragments of probably 14th century pottery. Beneath this foundation there was more dark grey silt.

The Causeway may however be earlier than the fourteenth century since it connects directly with the market square which was probably laid out around 1239 when Henry III gave a grant of a market to William de Longspee. If so the excavated foundation may only represent a repair or enlargement of an existing embankment.

The excavation showed that the river flood plain along the northern edge of The Causeway was only reclaimed for building in the early post-medieval period. This may accord with a decree of 1605 concerning the bailwick of Bicester, quoted by Dunkin, which mentions shops and buildings 'built upon the waste on or near the Market Place in Burcester'.

In 1816 Dunkin wrote that 'The Causeway extends from the town brook to the churchyard and was originally a raised bank ..... for crossing the brook: the whole of the hollow way has of late years been filled up and the brook arched over; but in rainy seasons the bank is frequently overflowed and the houses inundated'. This mention of a hollow way suggests wear along the centre of The Causeway but could refer to erosion at the western end of the street where the road surface rises towards the parish church. Animal bones and waterlogged material from this site are reported on below No. 63 and No. 64.

13. BICESTER: King's End Farm - Richard Chambers

Building work has continued on the housing estate throughout the year, but the watching brief has not revealed any further archaeological material (centred SP 573 227, PRN 11,204).

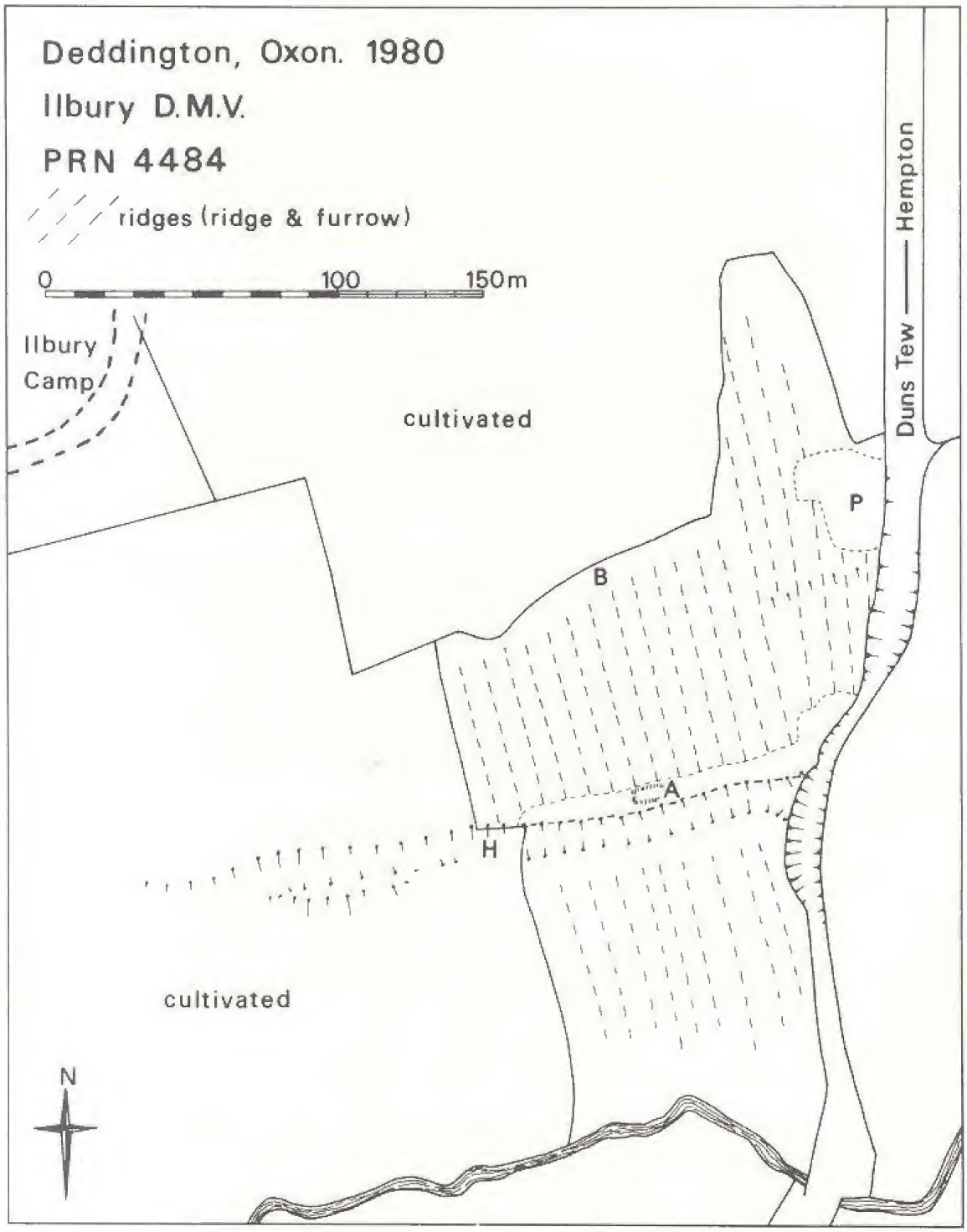


Figure 5. Deddington: Ilbury. Earthworks of deserted medieval village

14. BLEWBURY: Churn, Grim's Ditch - Steve Ford

A number of trenches were dug across the Grim's Ditch. Two ditches dug across the Grim's Ditch proper produced sherds of pottery identified by Richard Bradley as of late Bronze Age date. A trench at Churn produced disturbed occupation layers on one side of the ditch only. A trench across an apparent offshoot ditch failed to find the ditch at all.

15. BLEWBURY: Woodway Farm, Grim's Ditch - Gareth Thomas

Features were recorded during the construction of a 3m wide track alongside an existing gallop. The ground was dug to a depth of 0.3-0.45m where the track crossed Grim's Ditch. At this point the ground was lowered by 0.6m to provide a firm foundation. One small sherd of probably pre-Roman period pottery came from the upper ditch fill. None of the other features recorded contained any dateable material although one, south of Grim's Ditch, contained much burnt clay and charcoal (centred SU 5215 8340; PRN's 12,416 and 12,417).

16. CHECKENDON: The Devil's Churchyard - Richard Chambers

The South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group continued to work on this Iron Age enclosure. A new section across the outer earthwork was begun at a point 50m south of Trench III (see CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 172 Fig. 47). It is hoped that this section will provide dating evidence and further information on the original dimensions of the bank and ditch (centred SU 6525 8400; PRN 9,131).

17. CHOLSEY: Manor Farm - Richard Chambers

Recent ploughing has exposed an undateable pebble metalled pathway across the wet part of a field some 200m south-west of the parish church (centred SU 5816 8648; PRN 12,383).

Two hundred metres east of the church the edge of the former village still survives as a series of enclosure banks butting up against ridge and furrow (centred SU 5816 8715; PRN 12,385). Medieval pottery has been found between these earthworks and the church. Some years ago three adult human burials were apparently exposed by a drainage trench in the pasture field to the north side of the churchyard.

18. DEDDINGTON: Ilbury - Richard Chambers (Fig. 5)

During July Mr. Pauling of Ilbury Farm uncovered medieval pottery and rubble while bulldozing a hedge into its ditch to amalgamate two

small fields. One of the fields is known as Ilbury Close, and the site is therefore that of the lost village of Ilbury (centred SP 4410 3030; PRN 12,723). Previously the village site had been assumed to be near the present farm.

The site lies some 350 feet above sea level on a hillside to the west of the Hempton to Duns Tew road which is deeply sunken in many places and bridges a stream at the bottom of the hill. The site is overshadowed by the earth rampart of Ilbury Camp, an Iron Age hillfort which crowns the hill top to the north-west. The subsoil geology is a combination of sands and clays with a thin bed of soft, yellow limestone outcropping along the line of the deserted village street (H).

A survey of the site revealed a broad, sunken road running along the bulldozed hedge and the clear rubble outline of a building(A). A dense scatter of medieval pottery extended the whole length of the cleared hedge line. A further pottery scatter by some 100m to the north where topsoil had been bulldozed to fill a pond(P). The rest of the field remained undisturbed under permanent pasture.

After autumn ploughing, the hollow way (H) was seen to continue west 120m into the next field and the pottery scatter with it for the first 40m. The surface of this western field showed an irregular, terraced effect which had been created by the subsoil gradually slumping down hill. This effect is common on hill sides in the area and is not connected with the artificial creation of medieval house platforms.

Ridge and furrow ran up to the hollow way both on the northern side and to the south in Ilbury Close. The ridge and furrow to the north was well pronounced until it reached the headland beneath hedge(B). However in Ilbury Close the ridges were very slight. It was clear from observing the bulldozed hedge line that the ridge and furrow abutting the northern side of the hollow way (H) lay over the building remains (A) and pottery laden soil allowing no space for contemporary buildings and enclosures along the road edge.

The pottery from along the hollow way (H) was of 12th and 13th century date. However in the area surrounding the pond (P) finer wares were present which indicated that domestic debris were being discarded here until the end of the 14th century. The pottery sequence began again with 17th century wares suggesting that the area by the pond may have been reoccupied until the early 19th century.

Although no early pottery was found the first known record of Ilbury is in *Domesday Book* in 1086. The village is mentioned again in the *Hundred Rolls* in 1279. After 1306 the village was not large enough to be taxed separately and was taxed with Duns Tew in 1327 and Nether Worton in 1334. In 1316 there is mention of six houses and open-field land. By the early 15th century the manor was held by a wool merchant and the final depopulation of the village presumably resulted from a change over from arable to sheep farming. By the 16th century the only building remaining appears to have been the mill and in the middle

of the following century there is a suggestive reference to "Ilbury Pastures" (K.J. Allison, *et al, The Deserted Villages of Oxfordshire,* 1966, 40).

The Inclosure Award map of 1808 shows the hollow way H enclosed on both sides. The southern side is named as "Ilbury Close" and both it and the other enclosure on the northern side are described as "Old Inclosures".

The present Ilbury Farm lies half a mile to the north-west of the deserted village. It is a 20th century conversion of a group of earlier outbuildings. This present farm replaced an earlier farm 300m to the south-east. Some remains still survive on a piece of rough ground called "Ilbury Common". No early material has come from either of these farm sites.

19. DIDCOT: A4130 Didcot Link Road - Richard Chambers

This new road will be built mainly on pasture with ridge and furrow still present in many places. The road will also cut enclosure ditches of a possible Iron Age/Romano-British settlement which are visible on aerial photographs. As cropmarks generally do not show up well in pasture it is possible that the construction of the road will reveal further settlement features. The eastern end of the road will pass through an area where several Romano-British finds have been made. Further preliminary field work will be undertaken by the Didcot and District Historical and Archaeological Society during the 1980/81 winter.

20. DIDCOT: The Rectory - Alan Briggs

Trial excavations by the Didcot and District Historical and Archaeological Society have continued in the grounds of the Victorian Rectory. The excavations showed that the Roman settlement which lies some 150m to the east did not extend as far as the Rectory. Further trial trenches in the orchard between the Rectory and the churchyard have revealed stratified pottery from the medieval village. Work will continue (centred SU 5193 9051; PRN 12,381).

21. DRAYTON AND RADLEY: Palaeoliths - Jeff Wallis (Fig. 6)

The Palaeoliths illustrated were all found during the last two seasons field work on the gravels at Drayton and Thrupp Farm, Radley. The Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society spent some of their time looking for hand axes and associated material around sites under excavation. Tools from Drayton and Thrupp are all from first terrace gravel deposits and are in rolled or very rolled condition having been swept into this terrace from the higher summertown Radley deposit.

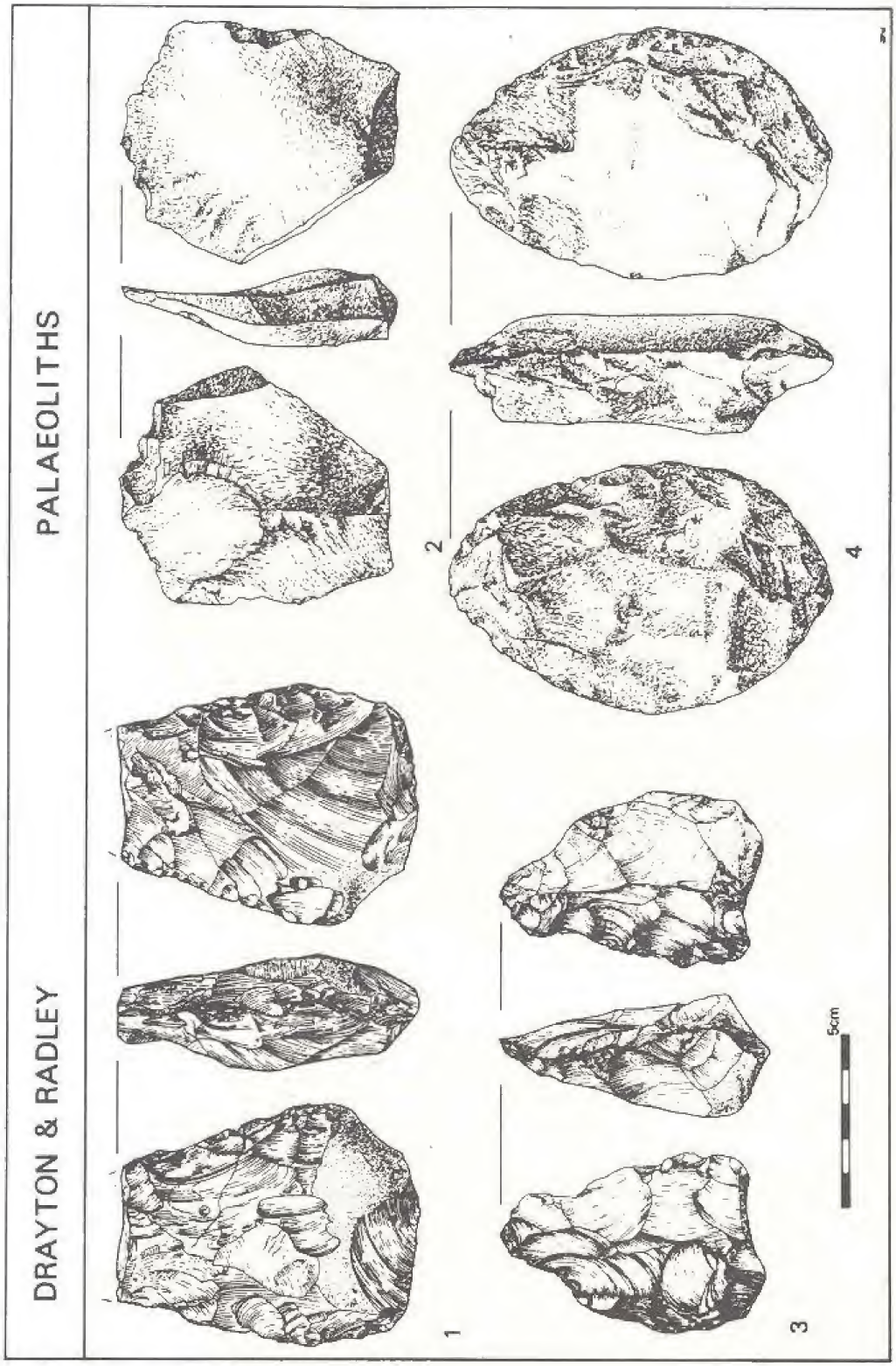


Figure 6.

These axes were not found in the pits but from screen heaps, but in all cases the material screened was from the adjacent quarries exploiting first terrace gravel.

The Drayton pit has a 10 foot depth of gravel and rests on Kimmeridge Clay; the gravel/clay interface here has an accumulation of larger quartzite flint and clay modules. The build up of large material at this pit may be due to the course of the Thames taking an abrupt change in direction and encouraging the deposition of heavy pebbles at this point. It is thought that the hand axe from Drayton may have been deposited on the clay bed, and a search of this pit may well produce further palaeoliths.

No. 4. This tool is not of flint but may be utilising a module of diorite and falls into a Wymer Class K ovate hand axe two thirds of one side is untrimmed brown/green cortex. Late middle Acheulian.

Gravel deposit at Thrupp House Farm pit is not so thick, an average of 8.5 feet, and the deposit of larger cobbles is most pronounced, heavy material evenly distributed at all levels. Ancient stream beds and probable early channels of the river are noted at Drayton and Thrupp and small samples of peat have been kept. A large cut across an old channel or lake deposit with a JCB at Lower Radley was noted. This deposit is now thought probably to be or Iron Age date.

No. 1. Broken butt end of hand axe Wymer Class Fb. Rolled and heavily iron stained with a few frost cracks, cortex present on butt on one side. Original length approx. 13cms. Late middle Acheulian.

No. 2. Large flake with prominent bulb of percussion and striking platform. Three large scars on other face. This flake is thought to be a waste piece from roughing out a larger hand axe, although a Neolithic date cannot be ruled out. It is of very fresh appearance and is of a grey/black fine grain diorite. A small blade in identical material and in similar condition was found in topsoil at Lower Radley.

No. 3. Small point 7cm long in flint, moderately rolled, and patches of yellow iron stain. This cortex on top of butt. Acheulian. Wymer Class E.

22. EYNSHAM: Merton Close - Geoff Williams

A watch was maintained during construction work on this site which lies partly on a gravel terrace and partly on lower, marshy ground. No finds were made.

23. FENCOTT AND MURCOTT: Ivy Farm - Richard Chambers (Fig. 7)

Wooden piles for a bridge were discovered during dredging to enlarge the channel of the River Ray at the point where the line of the main Roman road from Alchester to Dorchester-on-Thames

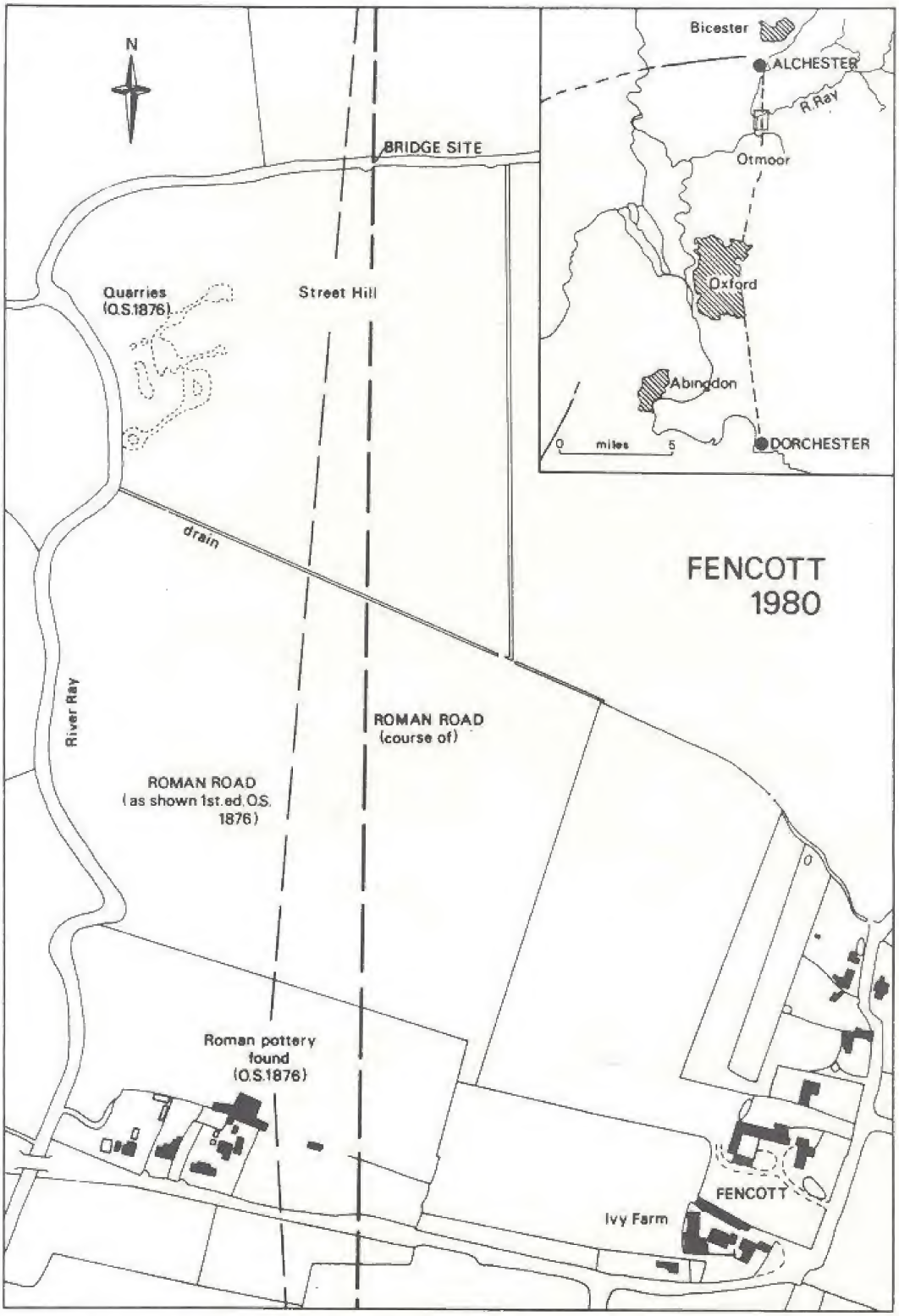


Figure 7. Fencott and Murcott: Ivy Farm. Position of the Roman Bridge across the river Ray.

crosses the river (SP 5720 1688; PRN 11,881).

The line of the road was recorded over a century ago, before modern agriculture virtually destroyed it. North of the River Ray the road appears to follow a slight 'agger' which is accentuated by the natural geology and a medieval headland. Directly south of the bridge the road passes over a slight rise perhaps significantly called "Street Hill".

Mr. Cooper of Ivy Farm first reported the presence of two large timbers dredged up fron the riverbed. Each timber was 1.3m long approximately 0.4m square with pointed ends. Following this discovery the stumps of more timbers were revealed *in situ* when the level of the River Ray dropped considerably during dry weather. It appears that the bridge was supported by two more lines of vertical timbers driven into the river bed. One complete line of these piles at 1.5m intervals survived embedded in the southern river bank. Each pile was formed from a single mature oak tree sawn approximately 0.4m (1ft. 4ins.) square. A further main pile was recovered later out of position. Two further lines of smaller stakes also survived on each bank, possibly to revett the bridge abuttments.

There were many wood chippings and offcuts in the black silts around the bridge timbers. If the debris were contemporary with the timbers they indicate the presence of weed preventing the wood from floating away downstream.

Dr. John Fletcher of the Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art examined the growth rings of one of the oak piles which had a 71 year sequence of rings with no sap wood present. This sequence could be matched with Dr. Fletcher's chronology for part of the Roman Waterfront at London and indicates the period of growth represented by the rings as being between 10-80 AD with a possible felling date of 95-110 AD. A radio-carbon date is also being obtained for the bridge.

If there is a prolonged dry period the recording of the bridge will be completed.

24. GORING HEATH: Bensgrove Farm - Richard Chambers

A natural solution pipe was examined with John Hazelden of the Soil Survey for England and Wales. The pipe consisted of a beehive shaped void eleven feet deep below a small surface hole. It opened out in an irregular fashion. The hole appeared to have resulted from ground slumping into a natural, water formed solution hole at an unknown depth in the chalk bedrock below. The void was ereated in the chalk, perhaps over a period of several centuries, by means of a series of roof collapses. It had travelled up through the clay-with-flints and Plateau Drift deposits that overlie the chalk, until the final roof collapse brought the hole to the surface.

During the excavations for the Chiltern cutting of the M40 in 1972 several similar solution pipes were sectioned. They were

carrot shaped and penetrated up to sixty feet into the chalk. They were filled with overlying deposits.

25. GREAT COXWELL: St. Giles Church - Richard Chambers and Michael Stone

Excavations were carried out in the church of St. Giles, Great Coxwell (SU 2698 9344; PRN 7105) when the wooden flooring beneath the pews was replaced. The aim of the excavation was to discover whether the present Norman building was built on the site of an earlier church. The south-west quarter of the nave was excavated by Michael Stone, and the south-east quadrant of the nave by Richard Chambers.

In the south-east quarter the removal of the Victorian floor boards showed that the floor joists were laid in the joist impressions of an 18th century wooden floor which had supported box pews. The 18th century floor rested on a layer of soil which had been spread all over the nave, probably to level up the uneven floor surface beneath. A grave had been dug through this soil demonstrating that at least a short time had elapsed between spreading the soil and the introduction of the box pews.

The original floor of the Norman church lay immediately beneath the soil spread. This floor survived throughout much, if not all of the medieval period. It consisted of the soil of the pre-church ground surface well compressed, worn and uneven through long use. Partly trodden into the surface were thin layers of decomposed sandy mortar and small chips of building stone from building work still covered the floor, the stone partly trodden into the surface. A heat-reddened area which marked the site of a small furnace was uncovered against the wall foundation to the side of the now blocked Norman south door. The furnace was presumably connected with building activity as was also a patch of lime indicating the spot where some plaster or mortar had been mixed. At a later date another furnace had been dug into the floor of the south-western part of the nave to melt lead for further building or repair work. Five large post-holes, equally spaced and each close to the south-eastern inside edge of the nave wall may have belonged to wooden scaffolding used when building the original Norman church. There was no dating evidence. No foundations were discovered pre-dating the present nave walls with their surviving 12th century features. However these walls appear to have been rebuilt and it may be possible to date its original construction and the floor levels if the flagstones in front of the blocked south door are lifted.

26. HARDWICK WITH YELFORD: Smith's Field - Tim Allen

A recent aerial photograph appeared to show several phases of an enclosure at Smith's Field which was due for gravel extraction in April 1980. The field was walked by Tim Allen, and 3 major

concentrations of Late Iron Age pottery were found. Each of these concentrations was examined by a 2 x 20m trench which revealed a number of ditches and gullies and pits of this date. The cropmark was found to be post-medieval. An area 50 x 40m was then stripped around one of the trial trenches in an attempt to uncover the whole of one enclosure. A further smaller area 30 x 15m was also dug including the 3rd pottery concentration, at the north end of the field.

The larger area lay on the junction of at least 3 enclosures, running from the Late Iron Age into the mid 1st century AD. The earliest, circular or oval, was defined by a succession of small gullies, some of whose fill suggested fence slots. This feature was succeeded by a large ditched enclosure, and this enclosure in turn by another enclosure with straight sides and an entrance on the north-west, inturned on the west side. From the numerous recuts it would appear to have had a long life. Just outside this enclosure was a small ditched enclosure, roughly 12 x 11m, itself recut several times. It was surrounded on the north and west sides by a fence slot, running parallel to the ditch some 2.5m outside it, and on the east by the large enclosure ditch, at a similar distance away. The entrance was presumably on the south side, where at one stage there was a small semi-circular annexe, with its entrance on the north-west. No internal features were found in the square enclosure or its annexe, though much of the interior had been obliterated by later ditches.

To the south of this enclosure was an area with 5 post holes which formed no recognisable pattern. The final phase of occupation was marked by an increase in pits, particularly along the lines of earlier gullies, and a further enclosure ditch to the south-west of the area. It was identified by increased burning and Romano-British pottery. Quern was prolific in all places.

The smaller northern area proved more coherent and less cluttered by small gullies. There was a circular hut gully with entrance to the east apparently surrounded a square trench built structure 4 x 5.25m with slightly bowed sides. The wall trench was unbroken, and there were no signs in it of post holes or a wall line, the fill being clean clay. Inside were 3 irregularly spaced post holes. A cow burial had been inserted into the south-east corner of the building, the animal had been dragged into the hole by its forelegs and had been placed upside down with head to the north-west. North of the hut gully was an annexe bounded to the north by an arc of gully running east-west corresponding to the hut gully on the south, with a fence-line of post holes on the east side between the two. There was only one post hole, on the west side midway between the two gullies, so access was probably on this side.

The square building and circular gully were superseded by a penannular enclosure to the west, with a straight south side 9m long and curving on the east and west, 11.5 and 7.5m respectively.

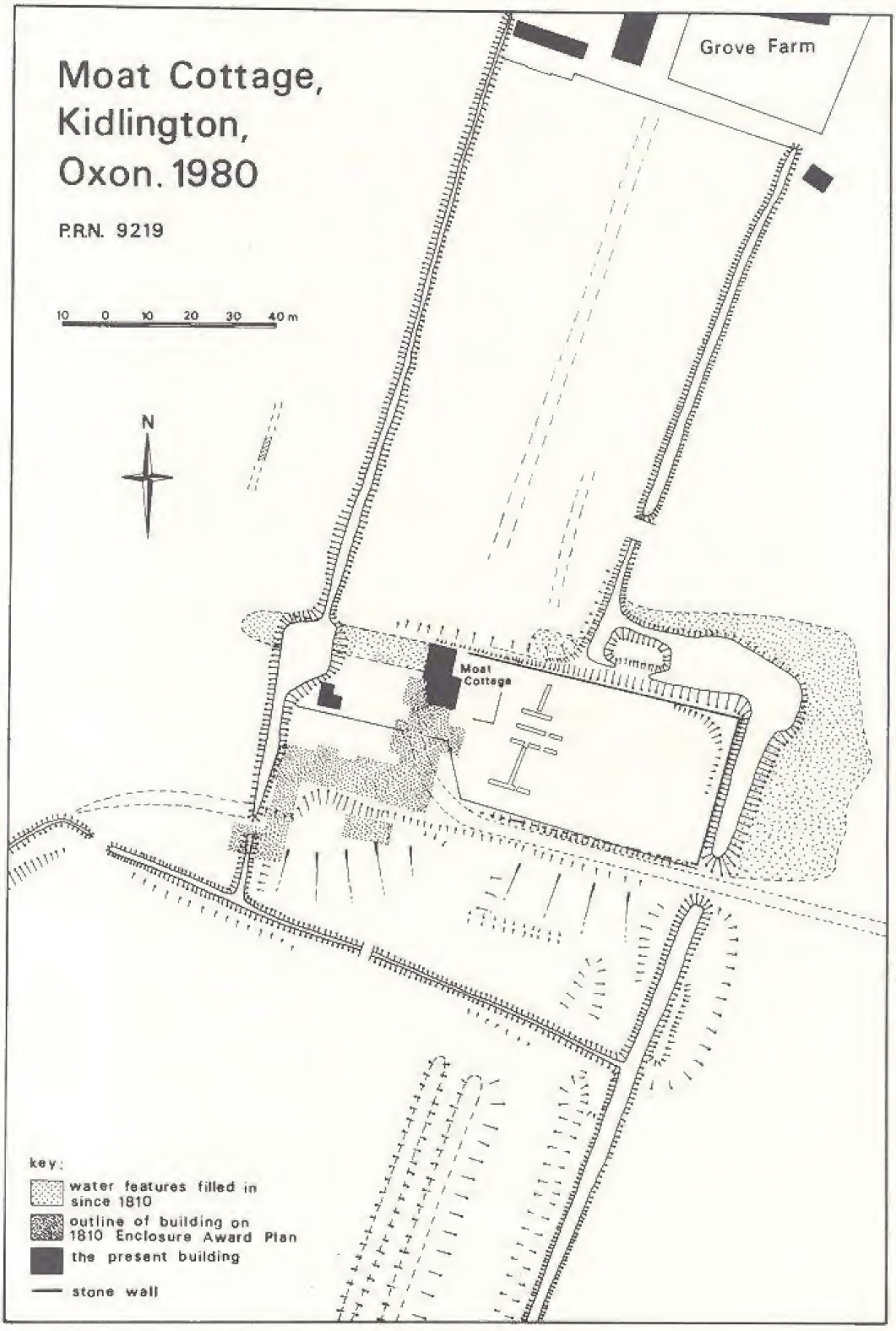


Figure 8. Kidlington: Moat Cottage. Position of the trenches of the 1980 trial excavations

The entrance was on the north. This ditched enclosure was recut on several occasions, it appeared from the gravel spill to have had an external bank. Since there was an accumulation of domestic debris on the inner side of the ditch it must have been a house enclosure. There are no internal features. There were 2 post holes across the entrance, but both appear too slight to have held a gate. Just outside the entrance on the west side there was a storage jar, minus its base, sunk into the ground down to gravel.

The latest fills of the enclosure are late first century AD, including half a dozen metal objects, one a Romano-British fibula, and several sherds of Samian. These finds are probably contemporary with a series of pits and gullies north of the annexe, towards which the penannular enclosure faces. Allowing for the long life of the enclosure suggested by recutting, the square building must date from just before or after the Conquest in the mid first century AD.

Salvage work is in progress south of the areas excavated, and is recovering further enclosures of the Late Iron Age, superseded by a series of trackways, probably Roman.

27. HORLEY - Richard Chambers

An unstratified skull was found buried in silts just down stream of the site of a water mill. There was no dating evidence and it was not possible to determine where the skull had originally come from (centred SP 4172 4343; PRN 12,382).

28. KIDLINGTON: Moat Cottage - Richard Chambers and Ian Meadows (Fig. 8)

This summer saw a third season of excavation on this medieval manor site. The site lies at the edge of the former cow common, one mile from the parish church and medieval village centre (centred SP 488 137; PRN 9219).

The objective of the third season was to assess the nature and extent of the medieval remains which until 1980 had remained inaccessible under the vegetable patch on the east side of the cottage.

The trial trenches revealed substantial stone foundations both clay and mortar bonded up to 1m wide. Several periods of building were present and the medieval establishment must have been largely stone-built. At least some of these buildings were roofed with Cotswold limestone slates since many examples were found during the excavation. Several decorated clay floor tiles were also recovered, both 13th-early 14th century and also later medieval examples.

Sufficient pottery was recovered to suggest that the site was not occupied before the late 13th century. After several phases of rebuilding and/or alteration the complex appears to have been

replaced in the early post-medieval period by the great house which survived until the early 19th century. Part of the reason why the medieval remains have been so well preserved was due to the creation of the walled garden to the east of the later house (see CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 177-9) which entailed dumping soil over parts of the site to level up the ground surface.

The Unit is extremely grateful to Ian Meadows who spent a second season supervising the excavation and also to all the volunteers without whose help the excavation would never have taken place.

29. KIRTLINGTON - Richard Chambers

Following notification from the Southern Electricity Board a watching brief was maintained near the allotments close to Castle Lane whilst trenches were dug for new electric cables. No archaeological material was observed.

30. LAUNTON - Richard Chambers

The Launton Local History Society has watched land drainage trenches being laid across pasture close to the west and south of the parish church. All of this land is covered with well preserved ridge and furrow from the pre-enclosure open field system. A plot of the finds from the upcast of the land drain trenches suggested two distinct areas of Romano-British occupation. Surprisingly, however there was very little earlier medieval pottery and the few sherds that were recovered lay to the south and south-west of the church. Later periods of pottery also occurred in distinct groups: 14th-15th century wares south-west of Manor Farm (adjacent to the church); the field north of the church between the railway and the road contained only early post-medieval wares; whilst 17th century and later wares formed two areas, one north of the railway and the second south and south-east of the church and Rectory gardens.

31. LEAFIELD: Roustage Barrow - Richard Chambers

Field walking in the vicinity of Roustage Barrow (originally two barrows) has provided approximately 7kg of pottery. The assemblage contained both late Iron Age wares and also much Romano-British coarse ware none of which was necessarily any later than the third century AD (SP 2984 1382; PRN 11,843).

32. MARCHAM - Richard Chambers

A human jawbone was found during the clearing of building debris from garden topsoil. Although it was clear that the jaw had come from a burial somewhere in the vicinity, topsoil movement during house building had concealed the exact location of the burial and in consequence any further archaeological information.

33. OXFORD: Abingdon Road and Folly Bridge - Brian Durham

A series of five new surface-water manholes constructed by the Drainage Department showed that the ragstone rubble causeway described in last year's report (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10,158 Fig. 42) extends almost to Whitehouse Road, over 400m in all. Further south it resumes again before 116 Abingdon Road. It was thought last year that the northern end was a fourteenth century replacement of a timber bridge but the extravagant use of stone and the good quality mortar suggest that this may after all be the bridge attributed to Robert d'Oilly. Current repair work on the exposed causeway south of Folly Bridge has concerned only a section of post-seventeenth century widening.

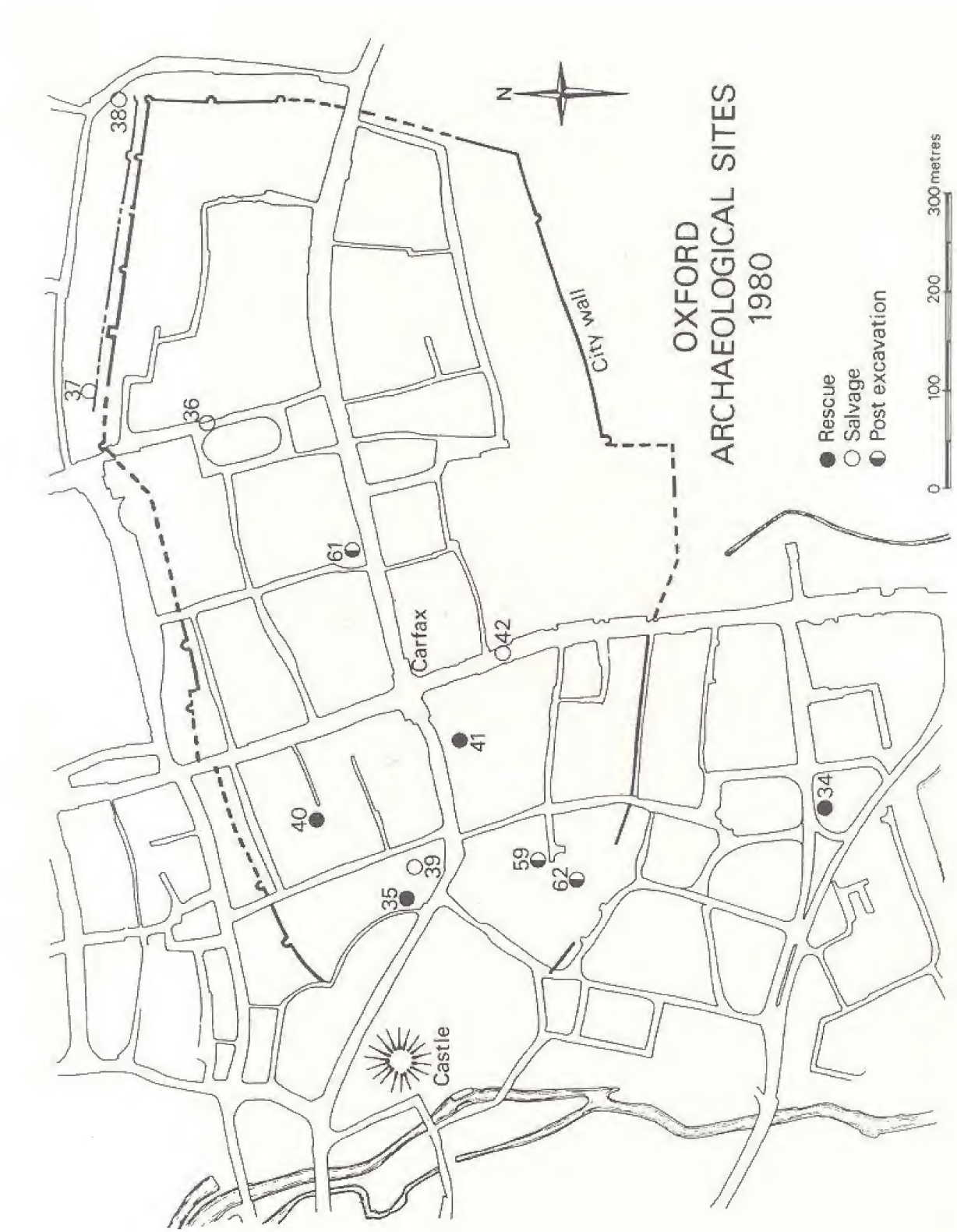
34. OXFORD: Blackfriars - George Lambrick

Further excavations at the north end of the west range of the little cloister (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 153-5) was intended to clarify the reredorter's relationship with the main cloister to the north and the little cloister to the south. Although the plan is more complicated and less explicable than previously thought, and is still not fully understood, it seems clear that the reredorter was probably added to the main cloisters. Since its internal drain did not turn west as previously conjectured, it is likely that it continued north into the west of the main cloister, suggesting either an original reredorter there, which was extended, or its conversion when the block was added on its south side. The little cloister was subsequently added to the reredorter block whose east and south walls were of one build, abutted by the main east wall of the little cloister range. Footings of a possible stair also abutted the south wall of the reredorter, perhaps indicating that the little cloister was of two storeys.

Excavations have now been completed in this area, but further work is expected to proceed next year in the area of the nave of the church, prior to the construction of the flats for the British Legion Housing Association. Initial trial pits have located the south nave arcade, but have cast doubt on the suggested "north nave" where part of a silted up river channel has been found. It is hoped that it will be possible to investigate this further.

35. OXFORD: Bulwarks Lane - Ian Williams

A small excavation was carried out with the University Archaeological Society to test a suggestion that the medieval properties here perpetuated the line of the west rampart of the Saxon town, which would agree with the early ditch found to the north (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 9, 1978, Fig. 38). Twelfth-thirteenth century pits and occupation seem to make this theory improbable, but there was evidence of a substantial property boundary on the east side. The earlier phase of this boundary was a broad post-in-trench feature on a north-south alignment containing tenth century local pottery. It may be possible to interpret this feature further during building works in 1981.


OXFORD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
1980
N
City wall
Carfax
Castle
Rescue
Salvage
Post excavation
0
100
200
300 metres
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
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42
59
61
62

Figure 9.

36. OXFORD: Catte Street, New Inn Hall Street and St. Aldates
- Brian Durham

A good working relationship has been established with Mr. Hobbs of the Drainage Department and his regular contractor, so that all new trenches and manholes can be watched, a total of thirteen this year. Amongst these there have been four new sightings of primary street metalling. Although dating evidence is usually lacking the current assumption is that this metalling dates to the establishment of the *burh* *c.* 911-12 AD. It is interesting that the latest sighting in New Inn Hall Street was of a pebbled surface, rather than limestone blocks seen in 1979 (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 1979, 158) suggesting that the primary metalling may not be consistent for a whole street. It was a surprise to find primary metalling in Catte Street, currently assumed to be outside the original burh. St. Aldates showed scattered pebbles in two sightings, while a third, further down the incline suggested that heavy use had worn away the earlier surfaces. If this sort of data can be collected steadily over a few years, it should be possible to produce a useful picture of the original street plan.

37. OXFORD: 51-55 Holywell Street/St. Helen's Passage
- Nicholas Palmer and Brian Durham

The excavation by contractors of a basement for the second phase of Hertford College's new quadrangle permitted the examination of the northern city defences immediately to the west of the outer city wall postern excavated in 1974 (*Oxoniensia* xli, 1976, 148-60). The basement lay across the outer city wall coming to within 2.75m of the inner wall. The excavation revealed a ditch whose lip was approximately 3.75m out from the inner wall and whose edge had probably originally been revetted with turf. There was no primary silt in the ditch from which dating material could be recovered, so it is not possible to say whether the ditch was constructed contemporaneously with the inner stone wall or predated it.

The outer city wall was found to have been built in the bottom of this ditch and to have had silty gravel dumped behind it to make up the ground level. Two sherds of pottery dating to the later 13th century were found in this gravel, showing the wall to be a late 13th century addition to the stone defences, and making less likely the suggestions that the gravel was the remains of the early earth rampart (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 157). A length of outer wall 22m long was exposed and partly removed by the contractors. It was 1.05m thick, constructed of coursed limestone rubble, set on a rough footing and had survived to a height of 1.75m.

In front of the outer city wall the ditch fell away more sharply. At a point 15.5m out from the inner wall it was 5m deep below modern ground level (56.85m A.O.D.) and still getting deeper. The material from the lowest layers in the ditch was late medieval or post-medieval.

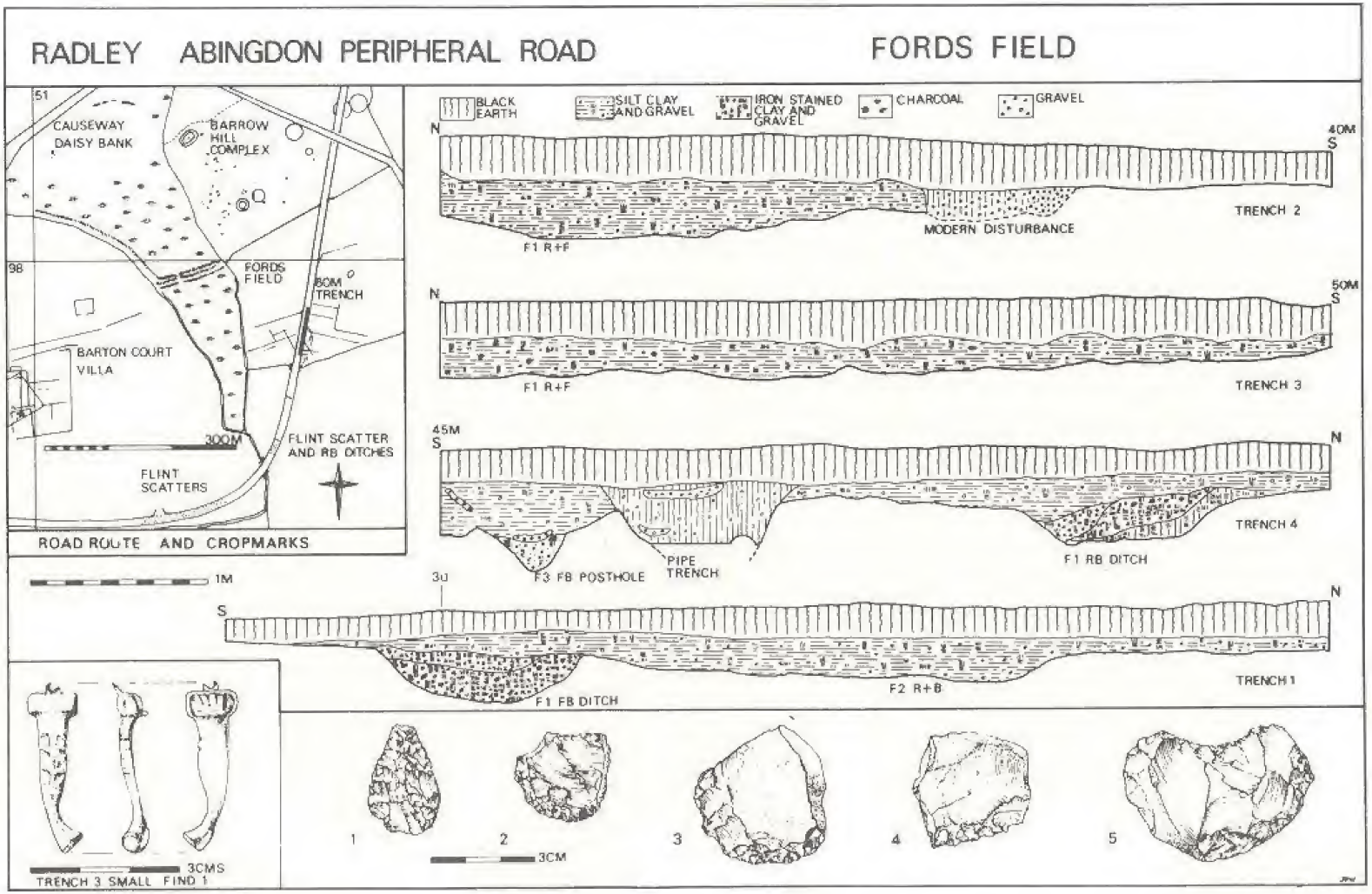


Figure 10. Radley: Abingdon peripheral road. Location and sections, Neolithic flint tools and Roman brooch

38. OXFORD: 21 Longwall Street - Brian Durham

Stanchion holes for New College's new residential building provided a discontinuous oblique section across the city ditch, to add to that published last year (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, Fig. 41). The Civil War recut seems to have been over 20m wide, while the early medieval ditch, prior to the building of the outer defences, may have been more than 30m wide.

39. OXFORD: 1-7 New Inn Hall Street - Brian Durham and Julian Munby

Julian Munby made a record of the surviving parts of the medieval New Inn Hall, site of the Royalist mint in 1643-6. The rear of the site was very congested due to neighbouring buildings, and though it is possible that fragments of footings exposed by the contractors were the back range of the Hall, the speed with which the foundations were dug and cast made archaeological work virtually impossible. Stratified medieval material was recovered from behind the cellared frontage. See also under Catte Street.

40. OXFORD: New Inn Hall, Frewin Hall - Roger Ainslie

Part of the floor of the twelfth century undercroft was excavated prior to refurbishing as a J.C.R. for Brasenose College. Only post-medieval floors survived presumably because the early layers had been dug away to increase headroom. The fourteenth century pillar was shown to be a post-medieval insertion. A small pit beneath the floors yielded a unique pottery jug with animal-head handle, in a fifteenth century fabric and perhaps copying the shape of a metal jug.

41. OXFORD: 11-12 Queen Street - Brian Durham

The existing cellars have been infilled, but a small archaeological trench showed that 0.24m of late Saxon stratification including the original street frontage survived beneath the cellar floor.

42. OXFORD: St. Aldates - Brian Durham

See No. 36. Catte Street.

43. OXFORD: 31-34 St. Clements - Brian Durham

Removal of a cellar wall exposed a ditch which may be part of a Civil War star-work shown on de Gomme's map. If this is confirmed in the redevelopment of the site it will mean that this *enciente* was rather further east than previously thought.

44. RADLEY: Abingdon Peripheral Road - Jeff Wallis, Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (Fig. 10)

The cropmark photograph, St. Joseph AM17, shows rectangular enclosures and trackways representing at least two phases at the edge of the second gravel terrace in Ford's Field Radley Parish. The marks were thought to be of Roman date by their proximity to Barton Court Villa only 450m west and by the Society's field walking in December. The peripheral road route cut through the centre of these enclosures. The Royco Group Ltd. gave permission for an excavation to take place and allowed access during construction.

A series of 5 x 1m trenches were cut over the marks for 60m and later the intervening baulks removed exposing one long section. Time did not permit the recording of the entire length, much of which was devoid of any visible features, efforts were directed to investigation of ditches yielding Roman material.

Altogether five ditches should have been seen in section but only two were positively identified as Roman. These were both similar in size and contained grey and Oxford colour coat ware. Trench 1. F1 produced a coin of Gratian 375-378 AD. The ditches are cut into a silt/clay subsoil and bottom into second terrace gravel. The other three ditches are shown to be badly damaged by medieval ridge and furrow. Several furrows were identified as shallow broad clayey silt features containing medieval sherds mixed with Roman sherds. A Roman Bronze Knee brooch with probable enamel panels was found within one of the furrows (Trench 3. SF1).

Fieldwalking the route along the base of Barton Court revealed at least two other Roman ditches in the vicinity of the Farm, these were seen in the scraped subsoil with associated sherds. Nearer Daisy Bank fishponds a focus of Neolithic flint flakes and tools in a distinctive red/brown flint very similar to worked flakes at Lower Radley were located.

The following flints are illustrated:

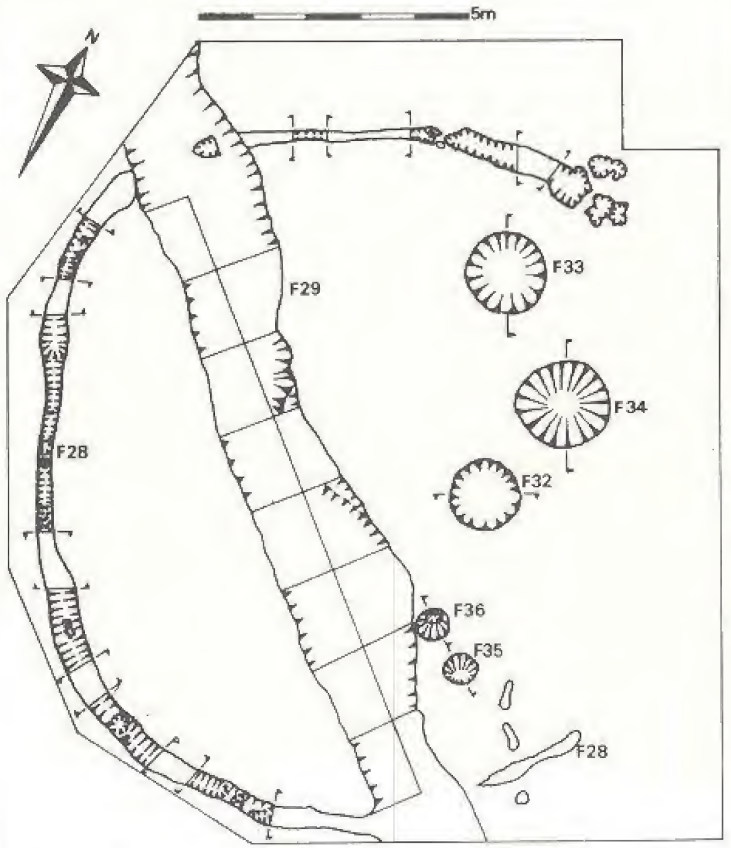
1. Neolithic leaf arrow brown clean flint, tip broken.
2. Thumb scraper, some cortex, in a dark brown slightly patinated flint. Possibly late Neolithic, found in the fill of a Roman ditch.
3. End scraper made from a fragment of gravel flint, some cortex.
4. Worked edge on a snapped bulbar end of a blade. Soft cortex mottled brown flint. Neolithic.
5. Large mottled brown flake with some cortex. The top is notched back as a shaft scraper and the base utilized as an end scraper.

45. RADLEY: Thrupp Farm - Jeff Wallis, Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (Fig. 11)

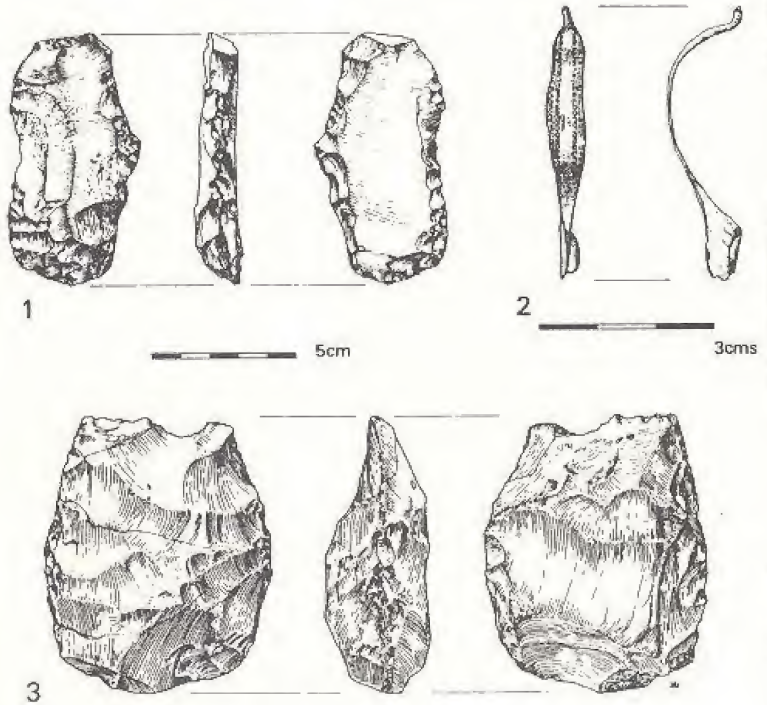
Excavation continued on this site (site C) begun in early 1979 (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 1979, 181-182). Recording and final excavation

RADLEY THRUPP HOUSE FARM

SITE C



F28 MIDDLE IRON AGE ENCLOSURE



FINDS FROM F22 PENANNULAR DITCH

Figure 11.

was completed on F22 penannular ditch. The feature is thought to represent the site of three round houses on one site, the gully showing at least two recuts. The dating is probably from the second century BC up until the early Roman period. The possibility of this feature being of a non occupational function is not ruled out - it is virtually identical to the Iron Age penannular ditch at Frilford (D. Harding, *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin*, 63) and is larger than the other very shallow gullies on site. It has also produced a mixture of finds including much undecorated pottery with sandy fabrics, bones and flint tools.

The following finds are illustrated:

1. Large clean fresh Neolithic end scraper with heavy white patination. Secondary work on bulbar side.

2. A late Middle Acheulian cleaver Wymer class KHv, in very rolled and heavily stained and frost cracked condition derived probably from the Summertown/Radley gravel. This was found in the north ditch terminal in silts at the base together with other large cobbles.

3. Late Iron Age Nauheim derivative brooch spring/pin missing. Punched rectangles as a decoration on the bow.

The rest of the season here was devoted to excavation of the other five enclosures. F28 took most effort as topsoil overlayed most of this feature and it was decided to strip it by hand. In plan the enclosure is oval, 13m across the north-west axis, with apparent openings at the north-west and north-east. The interior area has revealed a series of irregular hollows of orange/red loam and three pits containing mid Iron Age pottery and burnt cobbles. Also two large post holes 1.4m apart and 41cms deep serve an unknown function. The feature is cut by a plough furrow F29.

Investigations of F5 hut gully has produced some interesting dating evidence. Cleaning one of the gully terminals produced 1 cwt of cobbles, probably representing a post packing, and a large portion of an Iron Age globular bowl with impressed swag ornament. This is almost identical in character to a bowl from Frilford (D. Harding, *The Iron Age in the Upper Thames Basin*, Pl. 67). More sherds from the same vessle have been found in the entrance to F3 and in ditch F5/1.

At last one Neolithic feature has been recognised. A circular pit 1.2m in diameter and 39cms deep. This was situated in the middle of the entrance to F3. The filling of the top 20cms was a fine red/brown loam containing a few decorated sherds burnt quartz cobbles and the business end of a ground stone axe probably of Cornish origins. The base of the pit consisted of a dirty gravelly loam containing large sherds of grooved ware pottery, a horn core, a fragment of antler, thirteen flint flakes most with secondary working and a possible petit trancher derivative arrow.

Work on this site has been possible because of the king co-operation of the owner and operators of this pit, J. Curtis and Son

who have allowed access and assistance with storage and topsoil removal.

See also No. 21. Drayton.

46. RADLEY: Tuckwells Pit - Jeff Wallis, Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (Fig. 12)

In 1979 a ring ditch was excavated by the Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 182-3) at Tuckwell's pit, Lower Radley. The late Neolithic/Middle Beaker pot drawn by Jeff Wallis is illustrated here. The Beaker is now on loan to Abingdon Museum by the owner, Tuckwells Ltd.

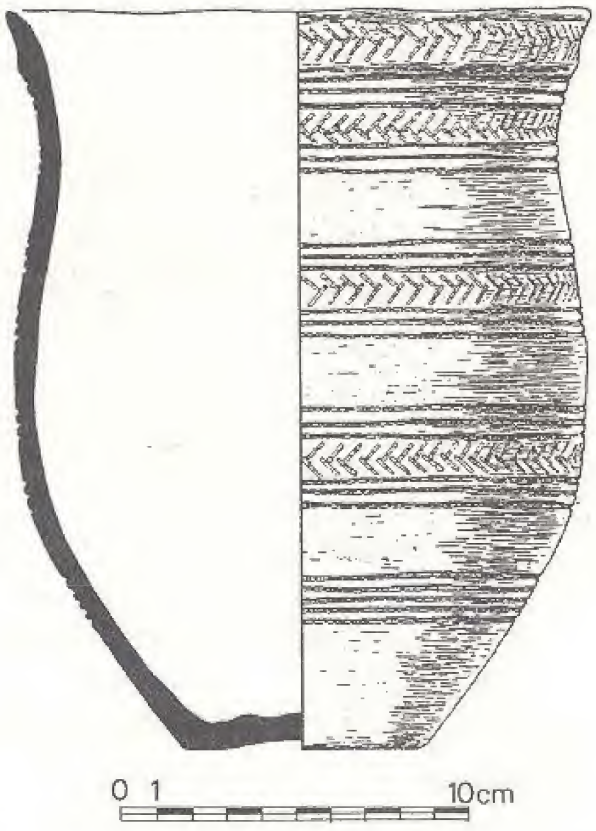


Figure 12. Radley: Tuckwells Pit. Beaker from a ring ditch excavated in 1979

47. RAMSDEN: Brize Lodge - Richard Chambers (Fig. 13)

The site of a probable Roman villa has been discovered at Brize Lodge. The site lies partly beneath the present farm which is at the end of a south facing valley 1km from Akeman Street (centred SP 3393 1525; PRN 12,388). Finds include a small bronze bird, perhaps an eagle. Eagle figurines have previously been found at the Roman temple site at Woodeaton, Oxon., and at Willingham Fen, Cambs., in association with votive objects. This new example may similarly have been a religious object from a small household shrine.

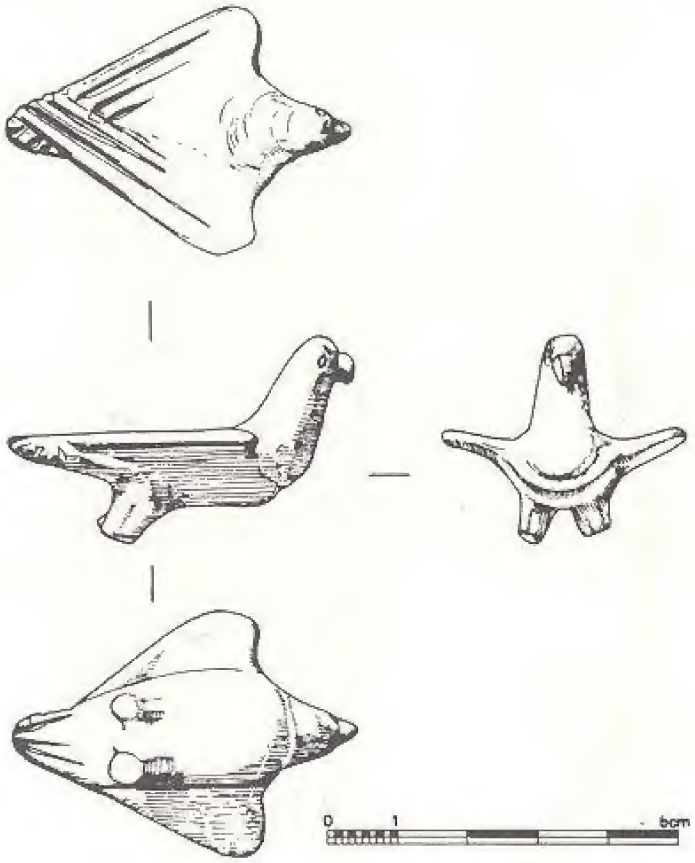


Figure 13. Ramsden: Brize Lodge. Roman bronze bird, perhaps an eagle

There are cropmarks 2/3km to the north of the farm which suggest further Iron Age/Romano-British settlement. One piece of possibly early Saxon pottery was found in an area of dark soil 0.45km to the north-west of the farm.

48. STANTON HARCOURT: Linch Hill Corner - H. Mytum & J.W. Taylor, Oxford University Archaeological Society (Fig. 14)

During the spring of 1980 the Oxford University Archaeological Society, at the request of the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, and with the kind permission of ARC, investigated a complex of features uncovered during the stripping of topsoil in advance of gravel extraction at Linch Hill Corner, Stanton Harcourt. The object of the excavation was to check on the ground the cropmarks discovered by Major Allen in 1933.

The earliest feature was a length of ditch (A) cut by Bronze Age Ring-Ditch (B), which was excavated by Grimes in 1940 (Site 6), (*Oxoniensia* 8/9, pp. 45ff). Grimes thought that the northern side of the ditch had been destroyed by gravel digging but it was in fact cut by various phases of a later enclosure (C). A similar ring-ditch (D) to the west was examined, and compares closely with the ring-ditches (Sites 6 and 7) excavated by Grimes at Linch Hill Corner.

Both enclosures (C and E) are dated Late Pre-Roman Iron Age/Early Romano-British, and are multi-phased, exhibiting considerable re-cutting. This suggests a rather lengthy occupation. To the north, a huge adjoining "C-shaped" enclosure (F) was partially excavated, and dates to the same period as the "settlement" enclosures. The adjacent linear feature (G) yielded no dateable material. Enclosures (C and E) are of the same type as that excavated by Grimes (H), (*op. cit.* pp. 47ff: Site 8). Richard Chambers examined the drove way that passes to the east and recovered material to suggest a date contemporary with the enclosures. The drove way appears to connect this loosely agglomerated group of settlement enclosures with a similar group (I) immediately to the south, and with another group at the end of the drove way to the north.

49. WALLINGFORD: Brewery Site, Goldsmith's Lane - Richard Chambers and Maureen Page, The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society

Post medieval pits and layers had destroyed the medieval stratigraphy of this site with the exception of a small section of undisturbed medieval soil containing much pottery (centred SU 6057 8942; PRN 12,393).

50. WALLINGFORD: 9-11 St. Martin's Street - Brian Durham and Members of The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (Fig. 15)

The trial trenches, reported last year, had showed that only a small area, 5m by 4m, was available for further excavation since the frontage had been destroyed by cellars. In spite of the limited area available it was decided to carry out further excavation before development, both to recover stratified late Saxon material and introduce members of the Society to the problems of excavating a deeply stratified site.

A fairly complete seventeenth century horizon was excavated which included a well, a garderobe-type pit, a semibasement and a large tile-on-edge hearth. These features had removed the medieval stratification, but had stopped short of two 11th century features which alone made the excavation worth-while. A well (F20) lay close beside a sunken-floored building in which three phases of use could be detected. The well had an interesting construction: the top had been formed by pouring a slurry of topsoil behind a wicker lining. The slurry had set hard, providing a resilient capping which had survived the collapse of the rest of the shaft.

Only a small part of the sunken-floored building could be excavated, and even this part had to be examined in two sections to protect the neighbouring shop premises 3m above. The sequence of events is nevertheless fairly clear. A 0.80m deep pit was lined with horizontal planks supported by vertical wall posts 0.20m square. Only two post-pipes were located, but a further two could be inferred from post-holes and a withdrawal hole. There were a series of beaten floors associated with very few finds. It may be that this sunken level was used as a workshop, perhaps for weaving. Similar but smaller buildings in York have been assumed to be single-storey, but the size and spacing of the posts in this example suggest that a second storey would have been possible. This suggestion is implied in the reconstruction drawing which shows the second phase. In this phase the building had apparently been shortened and its western end partly backfilled. The new floor was initially of planks laid directly on the ground, but in Phase 2b it seems to have been replaced with a new planked floor, laid this time on joists. Casts were made of the timbers by pouring plaster into the voids which they had left when they had rotted. The casts suggest that the second joist was notched into its wall post, so that it was suspended above the ground. The joist must have survived in this state until the end of use of the building, when the floor-

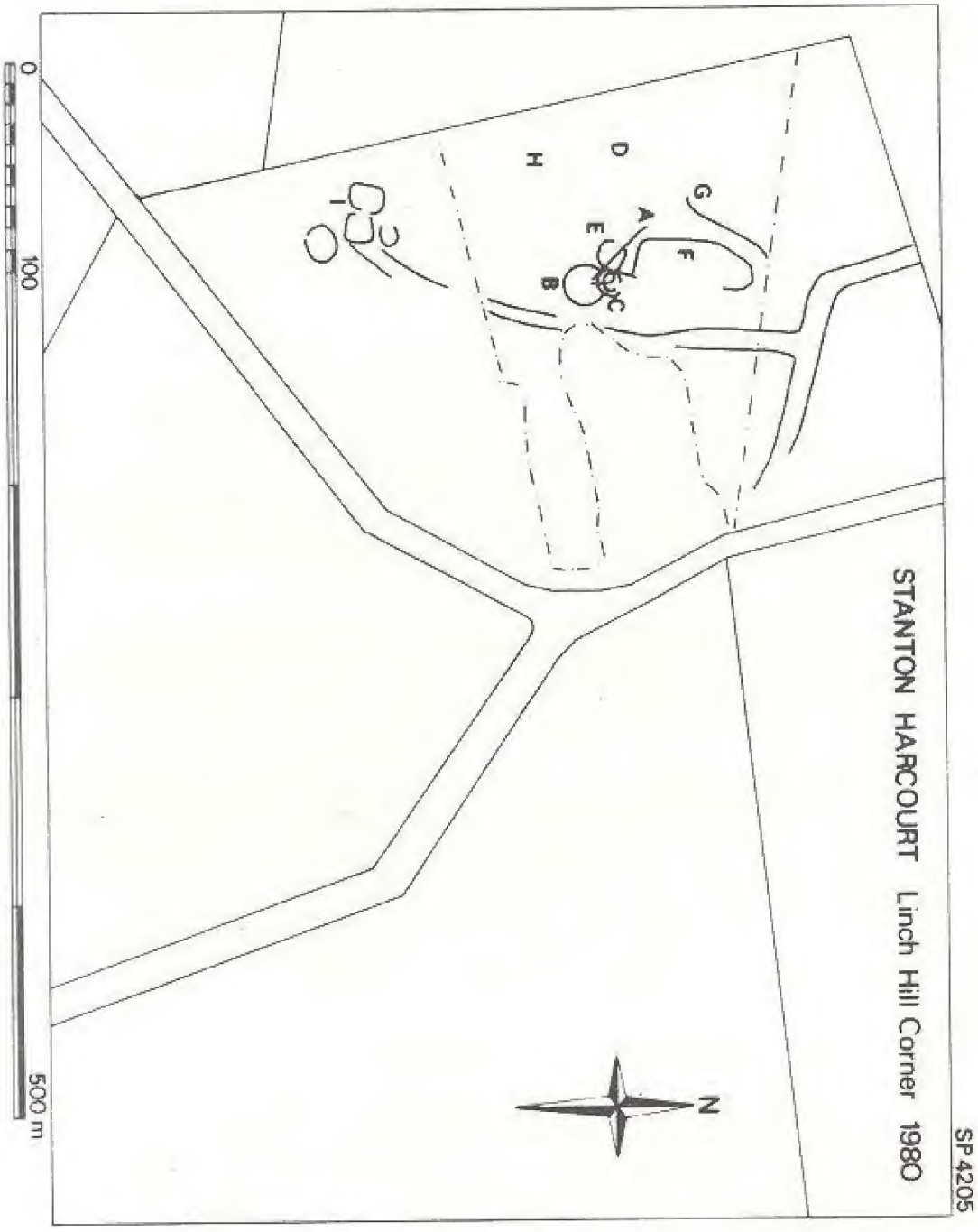


Figure 14. Stanton Harcourt: Linch Hill Corner. Prehistoric and Roman features

boards would have been taken out. The pit was then filled with a clay-gravel mix packed so firmly around the timbers that their shapes and positions were preserved. In the reconstruction drawing it is assumed that the Phase 1 building was long enough to be truncated in Phase 2: hence it has been shown projecting up to the modern frontage of St. Martin's Street. It is also assumed that the semibasement of the Phase 2b building may have had a side access similar to Hut Pit II at Cannon Street, London.

There has been some doubt as to whether St. Martin's Street was part of the original plan of the late Saxon town since it lies thirty metres west of the main town axis of St. Mary's Street. The present excavation shows that St. Martin's Street is likely to be pre-Conquest, and further study of the pottery may show it to be even earlier.

51. WROXTON ST. MARY: Barn Lodge - Richard Chambers

In August 1979 a collection of human bones was discovered reburied beneath the earthen floor of a barn which was being converted into a house (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 186). It can now be shown that the barn was built over part of a late Romano-British cemetery and that the original bones probably come for burials discovered when the barn was first built (centred SP 4150 4185; PRN 11,870).

Several burials were exposed when the ground surface to the south and west of the barn was reduced. Two of these burials were found to be wearing bronze and shale jewellery. One adult had a plain bronze bracelet on each wrist and a twisted bronze wire bracelet around the left ankle. The skeleton was decapitated with the head placed between the legs. This unusual practise has been found in other Romano-British cemeteries in southern and central England, including Bloxham dug in 1936. It has been suggested that this type of burial custom may have resulted from a belief either that the spirit of the deceased could be prevented from haunting the living or that the life force of an individual could be transferred to another by ritual killing. Roman religion and native cult beliefs were complex and the exact reasons for this ritual may have varied from locality to locality.

52. YARNTON: Pipe-line - Richard Chambers

Trenching to lay a new sewage pipe-line to the south of Yarnton Lane has cut across several cropmarks. Unfortunately the method of trenching, pipe-laying and immediate back filling prevented any useful observations being made (centred SP 4820 1293; PRN 12,389).

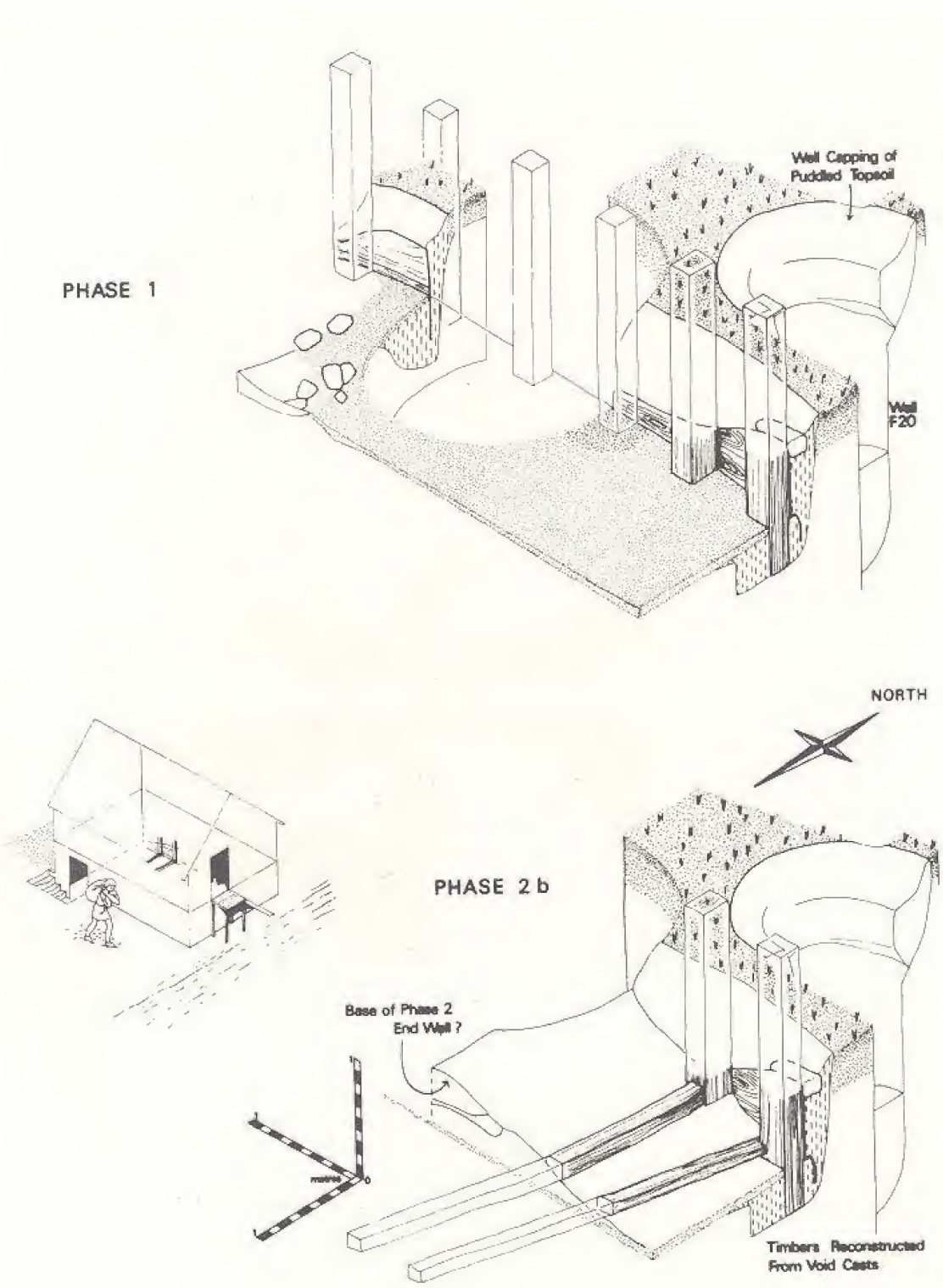


Figure 15. Wallingford: 9-11 St. Martin's Street. Phases and conjectural reconstruction

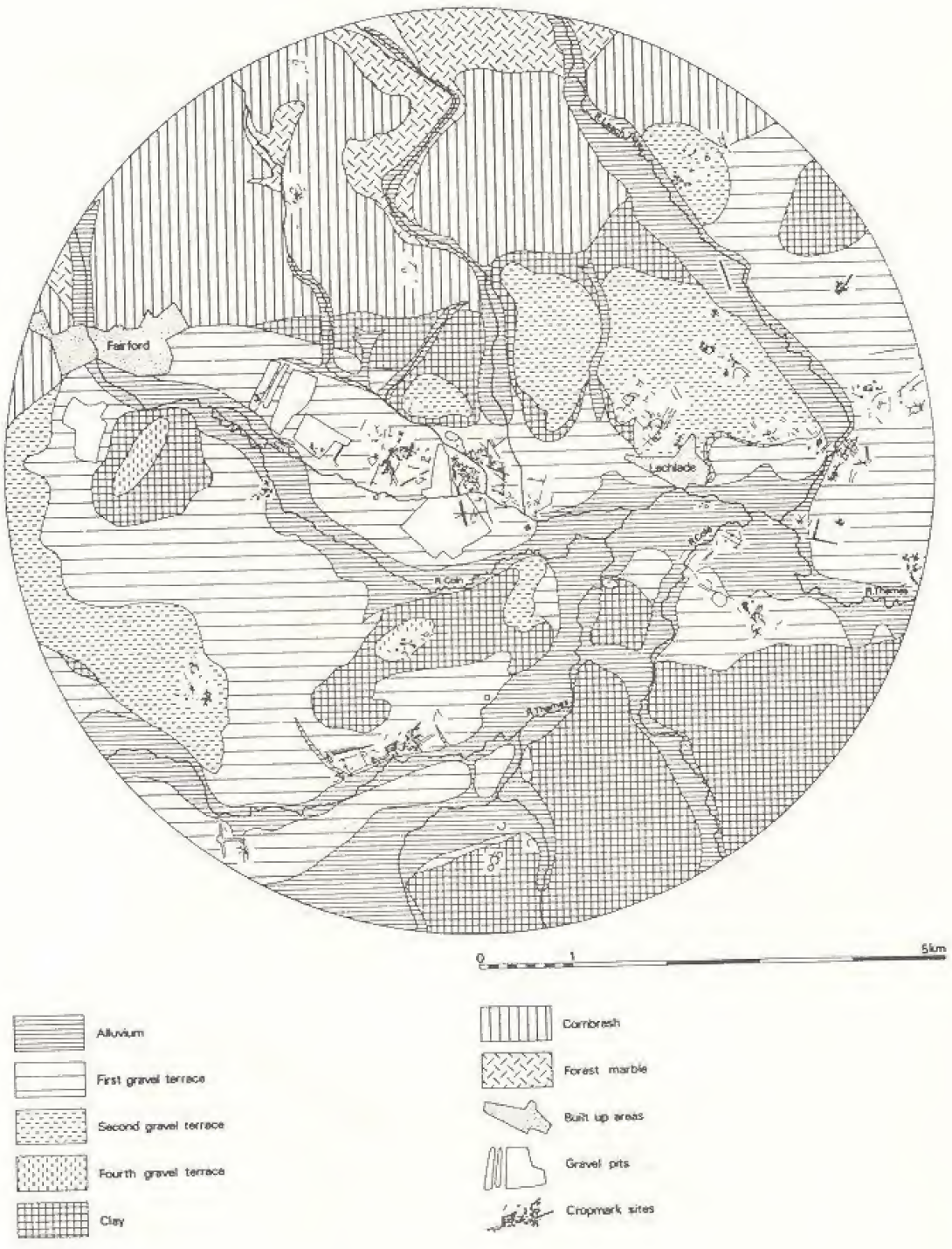


Figure 16. Fairford/Lechlade: Claydon Pike. Cropmarks and geology of the site and surrounding areas

53. FAIRFORD/LECHLADE: Claydon Pike - David Miles and Simon Palmer (Figs. 16&17)

Excavation in 1980 has concentrated on the two middle Iron Age settlements in Lechlade parish, both lie outside islands of gravel defined by marshy areas. Work on the eastern island (Area 1) had begun last year (CBA 9 *Newsletter* 10, 163-164). As reported then there were three house sites, on one of which the structure was rebuilt three times. The earliest house was surrounded by a protective ditch, forming an oval enclosure. The house itself sat inside a drainage gully and had a south-eastern entrance with a projecting porch. To the south-east of the house was a sheltered work area. There was a hearth inside the house and also a clay packed pit. The two remaining house sites were immediately to the east of the first one. One of these was superimposed on the first enclosure ditch and therefore post-dated it. This house had a floor in its northern half of limestone slabs and was rebuilt at least once. This year's work in this area concentrated on the excavation of the third house site which lay to the north of the second house. It had an attached annexe.

The western island of gravel had the more complex arrangement. A round house originally occupied the corner of a block of rectangular ditched enclosures orientated north-east, south-west which covered the island. The settlement expanded and further houses were constructed aligned on the enclosure system in three linear clusters. Taking all the rebuilding phases into account there were 18 houses on this site. In addition there was a four post structure.

Finds were relatively few but included a few fragments of briquetage, containers for salt manufactured around Droitwich. There were also several sherds of Malvern ware. Most of the pottery consisted of coarse, shell-tempered wares in simple bucket forms much of which was deposited in the terminals of the hut gullies. There were also six quernstones and some loomweights. Most of the sieved samples have produced carbonised plant material but in small quantities.

A third island of Iron Age settlement to the west will be excavated in spring 1981.

In the Roman period the islands of gravel were enclosed by field ditches associated with a trackway. The trackway has been traced for about two kilometres running south-eastwards towards the Thames, but has not yet been closely dated.

Work has begun on the large Romano-British settlement which is separated from the Iron Age sites by the stream forming the parish boundary between Lechlade and Fairford. The earthworks have been surveyed and the most eastern platform extensively stripped of top-soil. A large building, probably aisled, has been located at the

back (east) of the platform and will be excavated in the immediate future. A stone lined well 1.5m deep was also found. Beneath the platform was a circular structure of the first century AD.

For work on animal bones from this site see No. 63 below.

POST EXCAVATION PROJECTS

54. ABINGDON/RADLEY: Barton Court Farm - David Miles

This site was dug between 1972 and 1977. The settlements span the Neolithic to medieval periods including major Late Iron Age, Roman and Saxon phases. The settlement data is complex, with many structures, artefacts and ecofacts. There are some 25 specialist reports. The report has now been completed however it has epitomised the problems of publishing such bulky reports. Excavation reports have soared in price in recent years. The Unit's equally important publications on the Ashville Trading Estate and at Farmoor illustrate well this process. There is the question of who such reports are aimed at. Their price and presentation does not suit many archaeologists with a general interest, on the other hand this form of publication is not the most efficient means of disseminating information to a small number of specialists with widely ranging interests.

The publication method aimed at in the case of Barton Court Farm is a novel one. The conventional report - the excavation, small finds, pottery and biological reports are being produced on microfiche. A printed element of about 60 pages consists of a general synthesis and discussion of the evidence. This synthesis is cross-referenced to the fiche and there is also a detailed catalogue and index of the fiche contents. It is hoped that a reasonably cheap illustrated account of the site will be of wider interest than the conventional report. At the same time it should provide an accessible lead into the more specialist sections.

The microfiche is not meant as a dumping ground for minor information. It contains the essential primary data. With this method of publication the printed element and all microfiche can be bought as a complete package. Alternatively any single part can be purchased, for example the single fiche on the animal bones or that on the pottery. Any part of the fiche can be photocopied and provided as paper copy.

This form of publication provides a flexibility and cheapness not possible in conventional means of printing, even offset litho. *Archaeology at Barton Court Farm Abingdon* ed. D. Miles should be available in 1981, published by OAU and CBA priced about £8.00 for the complete package.

For work on waterlogged material see No. 64 below.

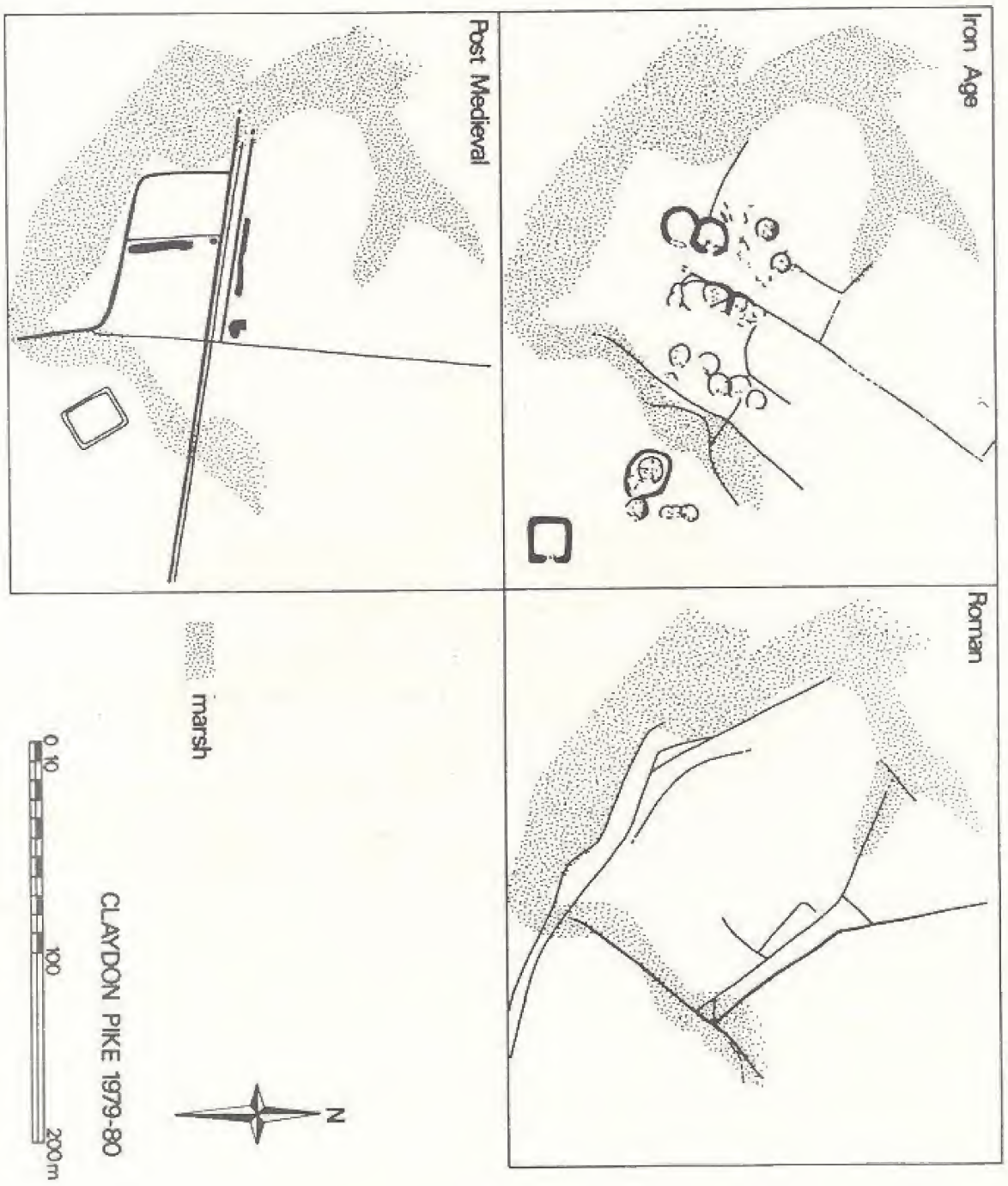


Figure 17. Fairford/Lechlade: Claydon Pike. Phase Plan

55. BERINSFIELD: Mount Farm Post Excavation - George Lambrick

Excavations of this Neolithic to Saxon settlement site were completed in 1978. The section of the report dealing with chronology is largely complete. Final drafting will only be possible when the results of several radio-carbon samples are known. It is hoped that among these results will be some gained from samples of cooking residues submitted to Dr. Robert Hedges of the Oxford University Research Laboratory of Archaeology and the History of Art who is developing the accelerator based on radio-carbon dating. Fabric analysis has continued to play an important part in the dating of prehistoric pottery: the use of flint tempering in the Neolithic and Bronze Age had disappeared by the Iron Age when the same change from frequently shelly fabrics to more sandy ones is apparent, as at Farmoor, Ashville and elsewhere. A similar approach to Roman fabrics showed a change in the grey wares from grog tempering to more sand tempering in the 2nd century.

Useful progress has been made in analysing residual pottery to assess its probable affect in biasing quantitative analyses of the pottery, and also in reflecting a shift in the settlement between the Iron Age and Roman periods. New ground has also been broken in studying cooking residues on the Iron Age pottery to shed some light on the different functions of vessels, and the use of pottery near open fires. The pottery and quernstones have also been studied in relation to trading patterns, and seen to indicate very localised distributions particularly in the Iron Age.

Reports on the soils and the human bones have been completed, and the section on burial practices has been drafted. Work has also continued on the analysis of structural remains through the characterisation of post-holes, and the study of finds distribution patterns has included trial runs of computer plotting of the material recovered by random sampling.

Work on the carbonized seeds by Martin Jones is nearing completion and it appears that Mount Farm, spanning a continuous sequence from the late Neolithic to the Saxon periods, reflects much the same development in arable agriculture as has already been suggested by more sporadic sampling on other sites covering the same period. For work on the animal bones see No. 63 below. The analysis of waterlogged and molluscan biological remains has yet to be started in earnest, but promises to provide useful comparisons with the carbonized material.

Draft drawings and some final drawings for publication have been prepared as the work progresses.

56. BERINSFIELD: Wally Corner - Christina Unwin and David Miles (Fig. 18)

The excavation of the pagan Saxon cemetery was completed in 1975. The accompanying figure shows the definitive plan of the site. Analysis of the Berinsfield material is now in progress, with the

aim of determining possible social phenonena within the sample of the community represented by the burials. This analysis is in two parts: the categorization of the burial information and the examination of the artefacts found in the graves and the analysis of the inter-relationship between these categories, to determine any social ranking. The data assembly consists of three sections: (i) Burial - form, grave dimensions, and grave furniture; (ii) Individual - sex, age, orientation, and position within the grave; (iii) Artefacts - categories and types.

111 individuals were contained in 101 burials. Of these burials 88 were single inhumations, 6 were double inhumations and 2 were triple inhumations. There were 5 cremations. 11 of the inhumations were located within earlier features: a pit in one case, while others occurred in the fill of Romano-British enclosure ditches and gullies. One cremation also occurred within an earlier gully.

The length, width and depth of the grave-cuts have been ascertained where possible, although any consideration of the depth is limited since the site was stripped by drag-line. Lengths of graves ranged between 0.6 and 3.02m, widths between 0.37 and 1.35m, and the maximum depth recorded was 0.47m. The lengths and widths naturally varied according to the size of the individual, but in many cases extra space had been included within the grave possibly indicating that perishable objects were originally present.

Most of the inhumations did not include grave furniture, but 7 were lined or packed with limestone fragments of various sizes, one had charred wood laid transversely on the base of the grave cut, and another charred logs parallel and adjacent to the sides; one grave had been furnished with both limestone and charred wood fragments.

Of the 111 individuals the sex of only 74 can be determined, either by osteological analysis or by examination of the grave-goods for diagnostic types (e.g. a spear-head or shield-boss indicates a male, beads and pairs of brooches indicates a female). Of these which are determinable, 37 are male and 37 female; of the indeterminate remainder 21 are children under 15 years of age, 2 are adolescents and 8 adults; 6 are of indeterminate age (5 cremations, 1 inhumation).

The age of the individual is determinable in 105 cases by ananlysis of the skeletal material, of these 31 are children under 15 years of age and 74 are adults. Although there are 12 burials of children aged between one and 5 years, only one new-born child is present but it may be Romano-British.

Orientation of the individuals was determinable in 97 cases: 49 were aligned north-south with the head to the north, 27 west-east with the head to the west, and 14 southwest-northeast with the head to the southwest.

The position of each individual within the grave has been considered with regard to body, head, arms, legs, hands and feet, although disturbance of the skeletal material in many cases and the inclusion in some graves of only a few inarticulated bones

limits the number for whom the positions could be determined to any comprehensive degree. On summary examination of the tabulated data, most individuals were interred in a supine position and only a very few were curved on their sides (or 'crouched'), with heads mostly resting on the back of the skull or turned to the left; arms were placed straight or flexed to some degree, but the legs were mainly laid straight with feet crossed at the ankles in a few instances.

Artefacts included in the burials have been assigned to the following categories: personal wear, weapons, occupational objects, toilet articles and miscellaneous. The types of artefact within each category date from the 5th to the 7th century and are characteristic of the Upper Thames Valley region during the early Anglo-Saxon period. The individuals buried at Berinsfield were apparently of mixed germanic origin, as in many other early Anglo-Saxon communities, although the brooch types (saucer, disc, square-headed and equal-armed) indicate the presence of a strong Saxon tradition. The community represented by the burials belongs to the group of early settlements in the Oxfordshire region with substantial Anglo-Saxon burial-grounds, such as Abingdon, Cassington, Frilford, Brighthampton, Long Wittenham and Wallingford. These groups may have begun as bands of mercenaries granted land among the already existing Romano-British population.

The synthesized data will form a basis on which to determine distinctions for social analysis. Cross tabulation of the data categories using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) at the Oxford University Computer Centre, will be carried out with a view to cluster analysis to determine any distinctions within the social structure of the Anglo-Saxon community.

57. CHALGROVE: Harding's Field - Phillip Page (Figs. 19-22)

Excavation at the moated manor site came to a close in October 1979 with the DoE's decision to preserve the site by burying it beneath a school playing field.

The long and arduous task of checking through the site records and ensuring that plans, sections and feature numbers are all correctly cross-referenced has been completed, together with flow diagrams of the stratigraphy which will form the skeleton of the final report.

John Blair, who has been doing some documentary research into the site, has now conclusively shown that it belonged not to the Quartermains as was first thought, but to the Barantyns. They were a well-to-do local family who are commemorated by several brasses in the nearby church of St. Mary. It would appear they were in financial difficulties at the end of the 15th century, for the manor was mortgaged to Magdalen College who took possession of the site and was probably responsible for the demolition of the buildings by 1484.

Work is also now under way on processing and recording the finds

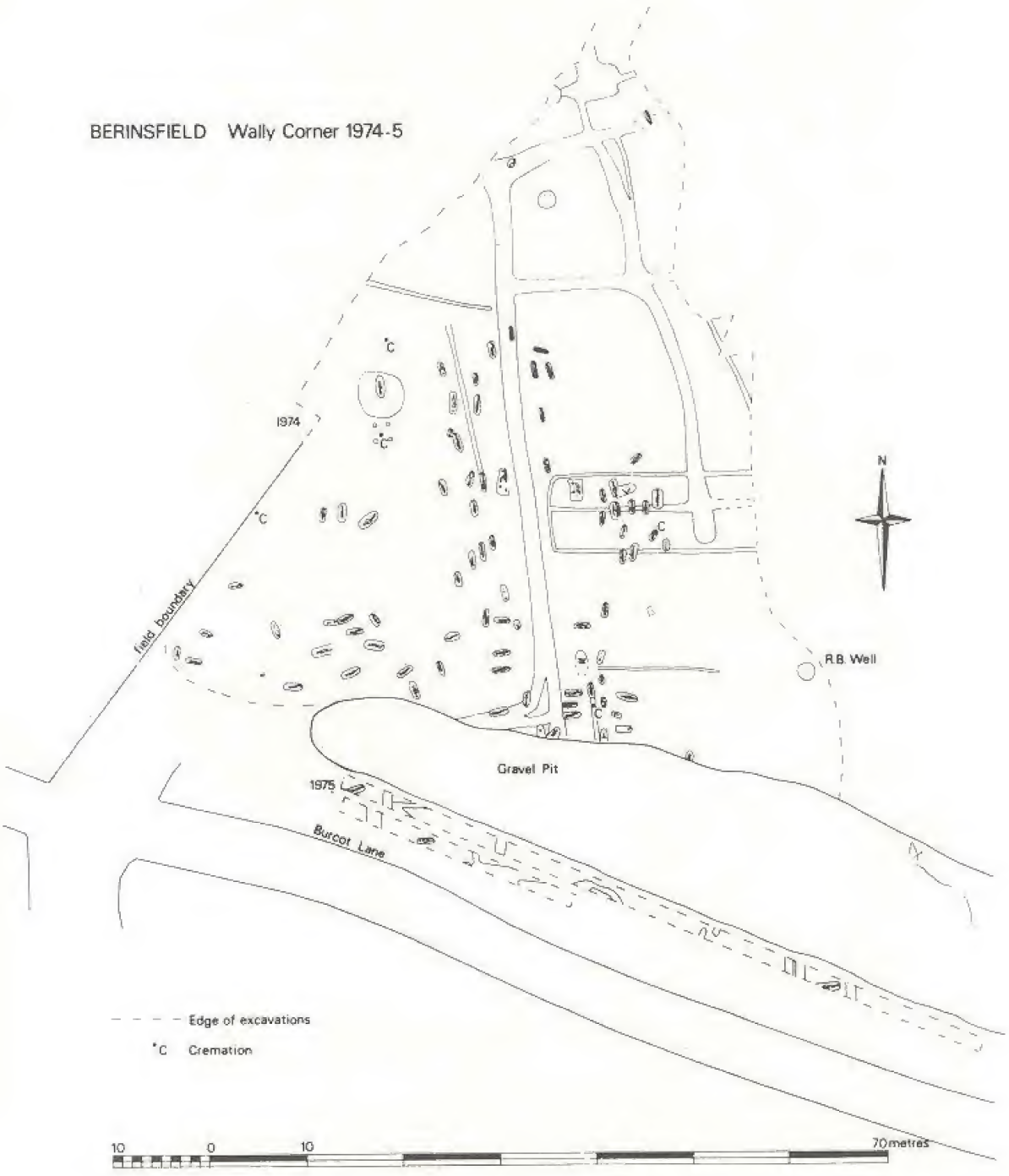

BERINSFIELD Wally Corner 1974-5
1974
field boundary
R.B. Well
Gravel Pit
1975
Burcot Lane
N
Edge of excavations
C Cremation
10 0 10 70metres

Figure 18.

from the site. Robert White an 'In-service Trainee', has looked at the objects of antler, bone and ivory. A glimpse of the way the occupants of the manor spent their leisure time is afforded by the presence of a bone dice and two gaming pieces, one of ivory and the other of bone. Other pastimes are attested to by the presence of small bronze bells associated with hawks and hawking, and an iron Jew's Harp.

An iron knife with a bone handle, carved in the shape of a figure draped in long robes, had been broken just above the waist of the figure. The Ashmolean Museum has an almost identical knife handle which depicts a woman in long robes holding a hawk.

The manor house in its hey day contained at least two decorated tile pavements and Christopher Storey has been looking at the decorated tiles recovered from the site. The tiles were all of the later 'impressed' variety. There are two groups, each was associated with a separate room in the manor house. One group in the pentice building were laid diagonally as the impression they left on their mortar bed shows. The others were from a building which may have been a chapel and were laid square to the walls, a fact revealed by the discovery of "half" tiles cut parallel to the side of the tiles to fit the edge of the floor. The most common of the Chalgrove tiles has a 'Fleur de lys' pattern. Tiles with this design have been found at New College, Oxford; Oxford Cathedral; West Hendred church and several other churches in the area.

Although New College was built between 1379-1386 it cannot be assumed that the tiles at Chalgrove were laid at this period as some show evidence of having been relaid. One curious and as yet unparalleled design shows what appears to be a monk's head surrounded by trefoils and oak leaves (Fig. 19).

Figure 19.

Recording the pottery from the site is being done by Phillip Page with the assistance of Cécile Trémolet (a post-graduate student from University of Toulouse) using the method devised for the medieval pottery from Oxford, by Maureen Mellor. The sherds are being sorted into their fabric types and the results tabulated, together with other pottery characteristics. So far 30 different fabric types have been identified from Chalgrove.

The pottery from Chalgrove is of interest in that its pottery traditions, although having some correlation with Oxford includes fabrics and vessels suggesting different production centres from

those which served Oxford. These production centres may possibly be those for Nettlebed and Henley. Chalgrove is also unique in having a much wider range of local Tudor types than other Oxfordshire sites so far examined. Tudor types being copies of Tudor Green forms, but made locally. Tudor Green is also present, imported from Surrey.

There is a fine example of a face mask which formed part of the handle of a 14th to 15th century jug. This has features which suggest it is also in the southern tradition (Fig. 20).

Figure 20.

Other material was actually imported from the continent (Fig. 21). Chalgrove has produced more sherds of the polychrome type jugs from Saintonge than have been found in total from the rest of Oxfordshire.

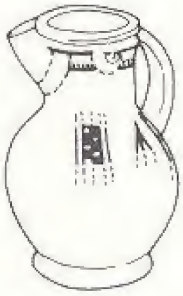


Figure 21.

Figure 22.

As well as the pottery there is other evidence of links with France. At least one French coin was found on the site and the figure of a saint, from a reliquary, known to have been made in Limoges (Fig. 22).

Bob Wilson has been examining the animal bones from the site and his report is given in No. 63 below.

58. HARDWICK: Mingies Ditch - Tim Allen

The site of this double-ditched, Iron Age enclosure was largely excavated in 1977 and 1978, although further salvage recording was possible in 1980. The basic site archive has now been organised, the stratigraphy has been worked out in detail and the phasing completed. The pottery and bone reports are virtually complete. The sections of the report dealing with the Description and the Local Interpretation are now being written.

For details of the animal bones and waterlogged biological material see Nos. 63 and 64 below.

59. OXFORD: 31-34 Church Street - Maureen Mellor

The excavation of these medieval tenements took place ten years ago but it is only now that the pottery analysis is nearing completion. Several thousand records on computer have been sorted into files which reflect the overall phase plans for each century, there being no stratigraphic phasing. The pottery characteristics will now be sorted more rigorously to enable interpretation of the basic trends which ought to clarify the provisional dating.

The pottery suggests that the site was not intensely settled until the 11th century. This early phase shows an unusually wide range of Stamford-type vessels in comparison with other late Saxon sites in Oxford. A short article on the subject 'Late Saxon Pottery from Oxfordshire: evidence and speculation', is to appear in *Medieval Ceramics* IV, next spring.

The petrological analysis of the fabric types has been completed by Dr. David Williams of Southampton University.

Preliminary x-ray fluorescence undertaken by Dr. Mark Pollard of the Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art on the glazes of some of the major wares within the county is promising as it distinguishes wares originating from Berkshire from those from the north of the county. This may indicate different sources for the lead oxide. Helen Hatcher, also from the Research Laboratory is currently working on a pilot study of pottery, bricks and tiles from the county using Atomic Absorption Analysis, with a view to isolating fabric-types and relating these types to raw clay samples which may enable us to locate the likely production areas of some of the major wares, even if we cannot locate the kilns.

See also under Oxford: St. Ebbes Sites (No. 62) and Animal Bones (No. 63).

60. OXFORD: The Hamel - Nicholas Palmer and Maureen Mellor

The report on this medieval tenement site has been completed and will appear in 1981 in *Oxoniensia*. The DoE insisted on the

use of microfiche at the last minute, so the pottery report had to be divided into two parts. The printed section includes the illustrations, the discussion and conclusions while the method of classification, a synopsis of key archaeological indicators for each structural phase and a simplified catalogue are to appear in fiche.

The Hamel situated in the western suburb produced long pottery sequences of the late 12th to mid 16th century and enabled comparison with the overall ceramic framework established at 79-80 St. Aldates in the southern suburb. Unlike 31-34 Church Street the continental imports at The Hamel were not present until the late 15th to early 16th century.

The objective of studying this large group of pottery included an attempt to compare the quantity and quality of the pottery from each tenement, to establish differences in the use of the tenements or the level of wealth of the inhabitants.

The Hamel pottery allowed several improvements to be made in understanding the development of pottery in the later Middle Ages and one tenement interpreted as a workshop, had a more limited range of wares than the house (BI2) which contained slightly more 'newer' fabrics and regional imports. It was felt that minor variations of regional imports probably reflected nothing more than individual preferences.

For work on animal bones and waterlogged materials see No. 63 and No. 64 below.

61. OXFORD: All Saints, High Street - Brian Durham

The excavations of All Saints church were completed in 1974. The detailed examination of the evidence for late Saxon stratigraphy is beginning to yield a coherent story. There were two distinct burnt horizons pre-dating the church. It looks as if the earliest burnt horizon may represent a clearance of this area. The radiocarbon dates would be consistent with the clearance coinciding with the first mention of the *burh* in 911-12 AD. The second burnt horizon has a calibrated radiocarbon date of 993±77 ad, if one makes allowance for the growing period of the wattles and the life-span of the fence a date in the early 11th century is possible. A suitable documented occasion would be the sacking of Oxford by the Danish army in 1009. If these dates are correct they are valuable in the late Saxon chronology of the town, but they create a problem so far as the dating of pottery of St. Neot's type is concerned. There are now four stratified sequences of pottery of this period. In addition there are a number of isolated pit groups, notably from outlying areas like the Castle and Logic Lane. Some of these pit groups have high proportions of St. Neot's-type ware, but the groups themselves do not fit into any of the overall sequences. This inconsitency inevitably casts doubt on ceramic dating. The best solution seems to be a suggestion by Maureen Mellor that certain

households were using St. Neot's type ware almost exclusively, as much as fifty years before it makes a real impact on the general ceramic sequence. If this suggestion is correct it is tempting to identify these early pits with Danish households. Attempts are now being made to look for signs of stylistic development in the St. Neot's types to see whether the exclusively 'Danish' pits are really the pioneers of a slow introduction of this pottery into the town.

62. OXFORD: St. Ebbe's Sites (31-34 Church Street, Greyfriars, Littlegate, Selfridges, Westgate) - Maureen Mellor and Gwynne Oakley

A new project was initiated at Christmas with the welcome arrival of Rita Rattray. The Post Medieval finds from the St. Ebbe's area including rescue sites at 31-34 Church Street, Greyfriars, Littlegate and salvage sites at Selfridges and Westgate are being collated. The excavations span the period 1967-1972. A gazetteer of finds from each assemblage within each site will be compiled and tabulated. Some asseblages from each half century will be more rigorously analysed and these assemblages will hopefully act as 'foundation stones' for future work in the region.

Dr. David Williams has thin-sectioned some post-medieval kiln material from the county and type samples from kilns in neighbouring counties have been collected to facilitate the sorting of the local coarse wares.

Initial results show that during the 16th and early 17th century the pottery in use in Oxford was produced locally. By the second quarter of the 17th century, a substantial proportion of the ceramic products originated from Surrey and London. The introduction of the pound lock and the subsequent re-opening of the River Thames may in part account for this. By the latter part of the 17th century a few Staffordshire/Bristol slipwares and London-type stonewares are found and a decline of Surrey white wares is evident. The second quarter of the 18th century finds moulded Staffordshire white saltglaze stonewares in every assemblage while the presence of Chinese porcelain is still very erratic. By the later 18th century, creamwares and pearlwares dominate and the Oxford market for local coarseware industry is severely affected. The opening of the canal *c.* 1790 may well account for the popularity of the finer wares and with the introduction of the railways *c.* 1830, the pattern of pottery distribution becomes very much more diffuse and complicated.

A full report for publication will be submitted to *Oxoniensia* shortly.

The work on Oxford pre-73 sites has also been dominated by a large quantity of glass from post-medieval pit groups. Glass wine bottles can provide a chronological framework from their stylistic development to back up the dating evidence from pottery and clay

pipes and it may be possible to outline typological changes in other glass vessel forms using these groups. A glass recording system has been developed by Stewart Brown who worked with the Unit under the Oxford University Department for External Studies' In-Service Training Scheme.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

63. ANIMAL BONES: Mount Farm, Berinsfield; The Causeway, Bicester; Harding's Field, Chalgrove; Claydon Pike, Fairford/Lechlade; Mingies Ditch, Hardwick with Yelford; 31-34 Church Street and The Hamel, Oxford - Bob Wilson

Examination of thousands of bones from 31-34 Church Street, Oxford confirm most conclusions drawn from The Hamel sample (now in press). For example species presence changes over the 11th to 19th century span of deposits. Red and roe deer are absent after the 13th century while rat and rabbit bones are absent, so far, from earlier deposits. Fallow deer, hare, fox, badger and ferret/polecat are identified also and bird bones promise new species records. Other trends such as the minute percentage of goat among the sheep should be evident when the data is analysed.

Rather different results from the Iron Age site of Mingies Ditch, Hardwick with Yelford, are of interest. Unfortunately most debris is badly fragmented and eroded to the extent that most data is unhelpful for small animal species, or animal size, age or sex. However good records of find spots and the complete excavation of the occupation area have made it worth seeking the general pattern of bone dispersal. Since the circular enclosure ditches may have affected the function of the settlement concentric sample areas have been adopted. This should cancel effects of where huts or other structures were sited within each zone, but cannot cope with the rubbish around each hut. However such deposits cannot be linked easily to particular structures and the rubbish appears mixed and without distinctive minor deposits. Nevertheless the central to peripheral distribution of debris suggests some disposal patterns e.g. the restriction of burnt and worked bone to the central area.

Groups of bones from Mount Farm, Berinsfield and the Manor House at Harding's Field, Chalgrove have been studied. Most unusually, compared to other gravel sites, pigs appear more commonly eaten at Chalgrove, and comparison with Oxford town sites will be of interest. Attention has been given to sieving limited quantities of soil for fish bones, including Claydon Pike, Fairford/Lechlade and Wallingford sites.

Small samples of bone have proved distinctive particularly bones from sheep feet. These predominate in post-medieval deposits

from The Causeway, Bicester and to a lesser extent from the Clothing Factory, Abingdon. The sheep feet are supposed to be waste from slaughter houses, and were chopped up and probably boiled to extract fat or protein. Tallow candles and soap are possible end products. We would be interested in any references which document such processes. The recent Victoria County History volume would suggest that deposits of such bones will be found outside Oxford's town walls where slaughter houses were relegated (with difficulty).

64. WATERLOGGED PLANTS AND INVERTEBRATES: Appleford; Barton Court Farm, Abingdon; The Causeway, Bicester; Mingies Ditch, Hardwick with Yelford; The Hamel, Oxford; - Mark Robinson

1980 has at last seen the completion for publication of work on two long-term projects, the Appleford and Barton Court Farm, Abingdon wells. The Roman environs of the Appleford site was quite diverse although grassland was probably the major ecotype and woodland was absent. The Roman villa at Barton Court Farm on the second Thames gravel terrace, had a greater involvement in arable agriculture than the first terrace site of Appleford. Interestingly, flax *(Linum usitatissimum)* and opium poppy *(Papaver somniferum)* may have been grown as oil seed crops at Barton Court, perhaps a culinary habit introduced by the Romans along with a liking for spices such as dill and coriander which were also present. In the early Saxon period there was no evidence for abandonment of land to scrub at Barton Court.

Work was also completed on the 12th and 13th century samples from The Hamel, Oxford. The coleoptera from them reflected the urbanization of the site with a substantial increase in species which tend to infest buildings such as *Anobium punctatum*, the woodworm beetle and *Mycetaea hirta*, which has a special predilection for the dry-rot fungus. The entomological evidence suggests that the site became part of Oxford's suburbs prior to the construction of the earliest buildings which fell within the excavated area. Remains of the sheep ked *(Melophagus ovinus)* were abundant in one of the pits on the site. It is a wingless fly which is an ectoparasite of sheep. Perhaps sheep were washed on the site prior to being sent to market or an ovine product was processed there: wool may have been carded or skins soaked to remove the hairs.

Examination of the soil cut by a Beaker burial on The Hamel and the burial ground surface beneath a Bronze Age barrow at King's Weir, Wytham indicated that in the Bronze Age the water-table may have been lower on the Thames flood plain than at present and perhaps did not suffer flooding. Subsequently, alluvium with a much higher clay content than the underlying soil was deposited on these sites. It has been speculated that a later Iron Age and Roman arable expansion onto the slopes of the Cotswolds, culminating in the great villas, may have caused soil erosion resulting in the alluvial deposits discovered on these and

other sites (e.g. Farmoor). The Cotswolds may always have been marginal agricultural land compared with the gravel terraces: organised into great estates during the Roman and post-medieval periods but abandoned to woodland in some areas in the Saxon period. In contrast the gravel terraces were probably more densely and continuously occupied.

Samples have been investigated from various minor sites in Oxfordshire. Probably the most interesting of these was what proved to be a late medieval deposit of gorse (*Ulex* sp.) which had been dumped on the edge of The Causeway, Bicester. Perhaps it had been introduced in the form of packing for pottery made in a place with a non-calcareous topsoil (e.g. Brill) because the Bicester area does not seem a very suitable habitat for gorse.

Work is at present taking place on samples from the Iron Age site at Mingies Ditch, Hardwick with Yelford. With the recent discovery of a late-Glacial channel in the top of the gravel and substantial areas of peat near the bank of the River Windrush as well as organic deposits of Roman and Saxon date in the various streams which traversed the site it is probable that a more complete picture of environmental development will emerge than for any other Oxfordshire site so far investigated. Some of the riverside peat deposits should prove most interesting for they were deposited during a woodland phase. Substantial oak logs and fragments of red deer antler are present in them.

ABINGDON AREA ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Jeff Wallis

The Society has seen an active year with fieldwork on six sites, some of this effort being given over to rescue excavation. Attention has been devoted to finalising work on a Beaker Burial at Tuckwell's pit, Radley with the skilled guidance of Roger Thomas and Mr. H. Case of the Ashmolean Museum who produced the report on the finds (No. 46 above).

Roger Thomas agreed to take command of the first of the 1980 excavations at Checker Walk, Abingdon (see No. 6 above). Minor excursions to Drayton and Lower Radley checked progress on gravel extraction and observation of a possible extension of the Neolithic Drayton Cursus and an ancient river channel at Lower Farm (Nos. 21 and 45 above). Three weekends were devoted to a sample survey with Richard Chambers to test the extent of a Roman occupation area at Nuffield Way Allotments (No. 7 above). It is planned to carry out this technique at Thrupp next summer on the plough soils with the remainder of the site.

Most of the season after the successful open day at Checker Walk with 300 visitors was devoted to Thrupp (No. 45 above). Work was concluded in November on the mechanically stripped part of the site. Excavation here was unavoidably re-directed on August Bank Holiday for three weekends to sink a series of trenches at Radley on the new Abingdon Peripheral Road (No. 44 above) - this proved

a very useful exercise and was diagnostic - the Society are lacking in site 'Heavies' although a 60m x 1m trench was dug by a dedicated few ardent supporters in sometimes pleasant weather conditions.

The poor summer put paid to what could have been an exceptional early season in terms of cropmarks. The Society attempted to become airborne but technical difficulties did not permit air survey so a cropmark plot was carried out in late June from the ground. The site, Dry Piece, part of the Barrow Hills complex (No. 44 above) was watched and permission to walk in the Barley crop was kindly granted by Mr. King of Home Farm, enabling an accurate survey to be carried out on an outstanding and detailed crop growth. This we feel was an extremely useful exercise on an area that may see the suburbs of Abingdon encroach in the near future, indeed the peripheral road took a corner out of this field in late August.

All this effort is not however possible without a dedicated digging team of around a dozen who we have counted on throughout this year braving all conditions whose time and assistance with sometimes menial tasks we now gratefully acknowledge.

KEY TO NUMBERS IN THE LOCATION PLAN (Not shown are: Nos. 1. The Thames Flood Plain Survey; 2. The Upper Thames Valley Survey; and the environmental projects, Nos. 63 and 64)

SURVEY PROJECTS

3. Frilford/Garford
4. Sandford-on-Thames
5. Uffington, White Horse Hill

EXCAVATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Oxfordshire

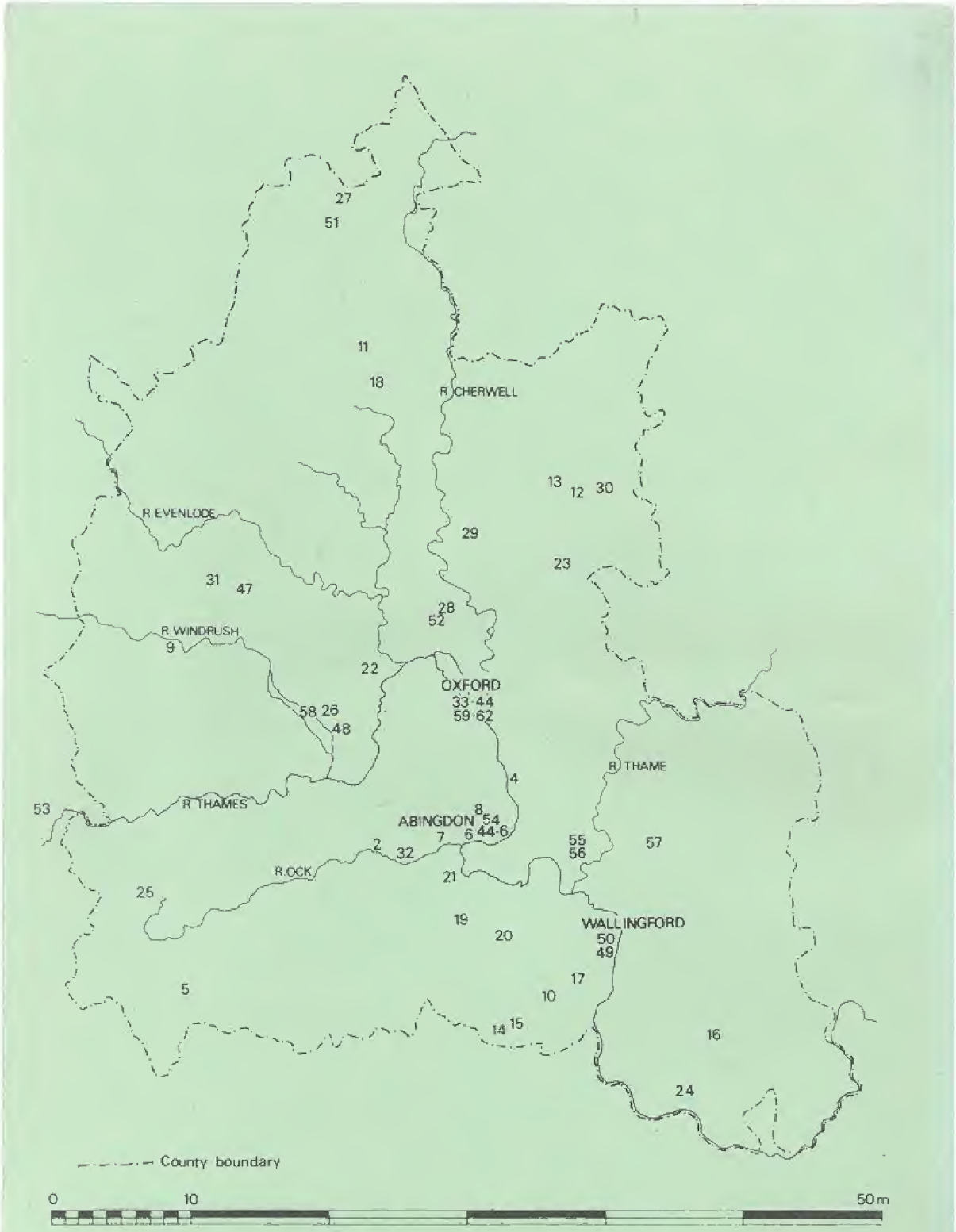
6. Abingdon, Checker Walk
7. Abingdon, Nuffield Way Allotments
8. Abingdon, Peachcroft Farm
9. Asthall
10. Aston Tirrold
11. Barford St. Michael
12. Bicester, The Causeway
13. Bicester, King's End Farm
14. Blewbury, Churn
15. Blewbury, Woodway Farm
16. Checkendon, The Devil's Churchyard
17. Cholsey, Manor Farm
18. Deddington, Ilbury
19. Didcot, A4130
20. Didcot, The Rectory
21. Drayton
22. Eynsham
23. Fencott and Murcott
24. Goring Heath
25. Great Coxwell
26. Hardwick with Yelford, Smith's Field
27. Horley
28. Kidlington, Moat Cottage
29. Kirtlington
30. Launton
31. Leafield
32. Marcham
33. Oxford, Abingdon Road
34. Oxford, Blackfriars
35. Oxford, Bulwarks Lane
36. Oxford, Catte Street
37. Oxford, 51-55 Holywell
38. Oxford, 21 Longwall Street
39. Oxford, 1-7 New Inn Hall Street
40. Oxford, Frewin Hall, New Inn Hall Street
41. Oxford, 11-12 Queen Street
42. Oxford, St. Aldates
43. Oxford, 31-34 St. Clements
44. Radley, Abingdon Peripheral Road
45. Radley, Thrupp
46. Radley, Tuckwells Pit
47. Ramsden, Brize Lodge
48. Stanton Harcourt, Linch Hill
49. Wallingford, Goldsmith's Lane
50. Wallingford, 9-11 St. Martin's Street
51. Wroxton St. Mary
52. Yarnton

Gloucestershire

53. Fairford/Lechlade, Claydon Pike

POST EXCAVATION PROJECTS

54. Abingdon/Radley, Barton Court Farm
55. Berinsfield, Mount Farm
56. Berinsfield, Wally Corner
57. Chalgrove, Harding's Field
58. Hardwick with Yelford, Mingie's Ditch
59. Oxford, 31-34 Church Street
60. Oxford, The Hamel
61. Oxford, All Saints, High Street
62. Oxford, Post-medieval pottery (31-34 Church Street, Greyfriars, Littlegate, Selfridges, Westgate)



LOCATION OF PROJECTS CARRIED OUT BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE OXFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT IN 1980. THE NUMBERS REFER TO THE NUMBERS OF THE SUMMARIES CONTAINED IN THIS REPORT. SEE INSIDE BACK COVER FOR A KEY TO THESE NUMBERS.